

THE
GODLY MANS
PORTION
AND
SANCTUARY:
BEING A
Second Part
OF
Vindiciæ Pietatis.

By R. A.

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THE

COURT

REPORTS

AND

SAMUEL D. LARLEY

BEING A

Second Part

OF

Various Trials

By R. A.

THE CONTENTS.

THe principal Doctrine, *Those that obey the Gospel, whatsoever, or whensoever they want, shall ever abide in a peaceful and blessed condition.*

Real. 1. *The God of Peace shall be with them.*

The Riches of this Promise opened.

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2. *Gods being with them, signifies,* 1. *The Heart of God with them.* 2. *The help of God with them.* 3. *The Presence of God with them.*

Real. 2. *If God be with them, all things shall make for them.*

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Phil.



Phil 4. 9. *Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of Peace shall be with you.*

WHat the particular Reason of my choice of this Scripture this day is, if you compare my present station with the intent of the Apostle, in these words, you will easily understand.

These words of the Apostle, being part of the close of his *Epistle to the Philippians*, are his *Valediction* or *Farewel* to them: It is not unknown to you, that I must now be parted from you, and I have pitched on this *Scripture* to be the close of my twenty years Ministry among you.

God hath sent me among you to be a *Builder*, and I have chosen this Text to be a *Hammer* to fasten, and drive home those Nails of Instruction and Consolation, which I have been so long endeavouring to enter into you.

God hath sent me among you as a *Fisherman*, and I have chosen these words to be as the *closing of the Net*. Behold, once more the Net is spread, and I am now making my last Draught; and oh that it might have the same good speed, as *Peters last had*, *Luk. 5. 6.* it would then pay the charges, though the Net break.

God hath sent me among you as a *Husbandman* to plough, and to sow, and I am now come to *cave* what hath been sown.

What is my aim in Preaching, let be yours in Hearing: Oh that both *Preacher* and *Hearers* might heartily joy in this desire! This once more, *God speed the Plough*.

In this desire and hope I drive on.

In

In the Text observe,

{ A Precept.

{ A Promise.

{ An Entail of the Promise on the Precept.

In the Precept we have,

1. An Act (*Do*).

2. An Object, (*The things that ye have learned, received, heard, and seen.*)

The Promise is in these words, (*The God of Peace shall be with you.*)

The Entail of the Promise on the Precept, you have in the connective Particle (*And*) which knits them up together. Do the Work, and have the Reward : Obey the Precept, and enjoy the Promise ; *Do what you have received and heard, and the God of Peace shall be with you.* Be careful of the former, and be not careful about the latter ; if the Precept be performed, the Promise shall be made good.

Doctr. 1. Christians must be *Learners*, before they can be *Doers*. (*What you have learned, that do.*)

Doctr. 2. He hath learned well, that hath learned to do well.

Doctr. 3. Christians eyes, as well as their ears, may help them on in Religion ; or, the holy examples of Ministers, should be living Sermons to people, (*What you have seen in me.*) Therefore the Apostle exhorts, *Phil. 3. 17. Mark them which so walk, as you have us for an example ;* and *1 Cor. 11. 1. Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ ;* that is, either I have been a follower of Christ, be ye therefore followers of me ; or else, *Be ye followers of me, as far forth as I have been a follower of Christ.* Those Ministers may go off the Stage with honour and comfort, who have left behind them the good seed of sound Doctrine, and the good savour of an holy example.

For

For mine own part, what my Doctrine and manner of life hath been among you, you are Witnesses, and God also. And however I have great Reason to judge and condemn my self before the Lord, and to bewail it, that my Conversation hath been less exemplary and useful, than, oh that it had been! yet I go off from you, with this testimony upon my heart, that I have not been of those who bind heavy burdens, and lay them on other mens shoulders, but will not touch them with one of their fingers; but my endeavour hath been, to press on mine own soul, and to hold out in my own practice, that Word of Life which I have preached to you; and therefore am bold, in this sense, to exhort you in the words of the Apostle, *Be ye followers of me, as far forth as you have seen me a follower of Christ.*

Doctr. 4. Godly Ministers, when they are parting from their people, would fain leave God behind them. Though it be not unusual, when the Lord sends them away, he goes with them; God and his Messengers, do not seldom take their farewell of people together; yet their earnest desire is, that though they must away, yet the Lord would stay.

Doctr. 5. Faithful Ministers would be *Messengers of Peace*, going, as well as coming.

As the Apostles first words were to be, *Peace be unto you*, Mat. 10. so some of this Apostles last words were, *The God of Peace shall be with you.*

Doctr. 6. Whenever Ministers part with their people, if they can but leave godliness in them, they shall certainly leave God with them. Or,

Those that obey the Gospel, whatsoever, or whomsoever they want, shall ever be in a peaceful and blessed condition.

These things do, that is, live in the practice and power of that Doctrine of godliness, *which you have received*

ved, and heard; and then fear not, the God of Peace shall be with you.

This Doctrine I shall fully prove to you, after I have premised,

That the Doctrine which I have preached to you is, the Doctrine of Godliness; the sum whereof take in these four particulars:

1. That Jesus Christ, who came into the World to save sinners, came also to sanctifie and purge them from their sins.

2. That those that believe in Jesus, must be careful to maintain good works, or to live a godly life.

3. That this godliness is not such a slight, and easie, and empty thing, as the mistaken World imagine; but stands in an exact conformity of the whole Man, Heart and Life, to the whole will of God,

4. That as whosoever believes not in Jesus, so whosoever is short of this true sincere godliness, cannot be saved.

This is the sum of that Doctrine which I have preached unto you; which being the eternal Truth of God, I herein embatque my own soul and life, desiring to be found in that same Jesus, and to be found walking in that same way of Righteousness which I have declared unto you.

2. That my design and aim in preaching this Doctrine to you, hath been, to beget in you, and through the influence and assistance of the Eternal Spirit, to bring you to this true godliness. I have travelled in birth with you, that Christ might be formed in you; that I might leave you possessors and partakers of that grace which accompanies salvation; that your faith might stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; that your Repentance might be Repentance unto life, not to be repented of; that you might obey from

from the heart; that form of Doctrine that hath been deliver'd unto you, that you might stand compleat in all the Will of God; that you might be holy and harmless, the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked generation, amongst whom you must shine as Lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life: that being rooted and grounded in love, you might comprehend with all Saints, what is the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God: To this end have I taught every one, and warned every one, that I might present you Perfect in Christ Jesus.

3. That as far forth as the success hath answered my design and aim upon any of your souls, so far forth stand you intitled to this glorious promise in the Text, *The God of Peace shall be with you*, Looke how many souls there are amongst you, that live in the power and obedience of those Truths you have received; to so many can I with confidence give this farewell of the Apostle without ifs or ands, *The God of Peace shall be with you*. To whomsoever the Lord hath been a God of *Grace*, to them will he be a God of *Peace*. Whoever amongst you have this God of *Grace* dwelling & ruling in you, shall certainly find this God of *Peace* dwelling and abiding with you: As for all others, though I can heartily make this my parting Prayer, *The Lord be with you, the God of Peace be with you*, yet I cannot turn this Prayer into a Promise, nor give you any assurance, *That the God of Peace will be with you*.

These things premised, I shall now give you the full proof of the Doctrine in the following Reasons. The Doctrine you remember is, *Thoe that obey the Gospel, whatsoever, or whomsoever they want, shall ever be in a peaceful and blessed condition*.

The Reasons are,

1. *The God of Peace shall be with them.*
2. *if God be with them, all things whatsoever befall them, shall make for their Good.*

Reas. 1. *The God of Peace shall be with them*; these things do, Live in the obedience of the holy Doctrine which you have received, and *the God of Peace shall be with you*. This glorious promise is pregnant with all the blessings that Heaven and Earth can afford.

If you ask why, what is there in it? I demand of you, What is there in God? God is in the promise, all that is in God, is here assured to the Godly. The *Philosophers* of old attained to some glimmerings of the excellencies that are in God, by these three ways.

1. *Per viam Negationis*, conceiving of him as a Being, removed from all things signifying imperfection, as ignorance, impotence, iniquitie, corruptibilitie, composition, alteration, or any limits or bounds of his Essence, Power, and Glory.

2. *Per viam Causalitatis*, conceiving of him as the fountain of all other Beings; and thence concluding, That whatsoever excellencies or perfections are scattered up and down in the whole Creation: are all united in him, from whom they had there Original.

3. *Per viam Eminentie*, by way of excellencie, so that whatever perfections, whatever goodness is to be found in any creature, though it be not to be found in God *formaliter*, yet there is that in him (he being the first cause of all) that doth infinitely, superabundantly answer them all. Though there be not the same specific excellencies in him; not those very pleasures and delights issuing from him, which the creatures yield; yet there are such excellencies, such perfections, as transcend and surpass them all. The Scriptures tell us more positively and plainly, That God is Almighty,

Omni-

Omniscient, Omnipotent, Infinite, Eternal, Unchangeable, All-sufficient, Holy, Righteous, Gracious; the portion, the protection, the Rewarder, yea, the exceeding great Reward of them that diligently seek him. And this is he that is in the Promise. God is in the promise. I must not enlarge in this spacious field; I shall keep nearer the Text, and shall confine my self to these four particulars.

1. God is in the Promise as the *God of Peace*, as the Author and bestower of Peace. The greatest of blessings, is the blessing of peace. Peace hath all blessings included in it; it hath possession, fruition, and security; it hath plenty, pleasure, and safety; where there is no peace, there's no security for the holding, nor opportunity of enjoying what we have. Whatever we have, we have it as if we had it not. Peace is the greatest of blessings.

Peace with God is the most glorious of peace. What is there that's excellent, what is there that's desirable that is not comprehended in this peace with God? Where there's peace, there's *pardon*: guilt cannot consist with this peace; *being justified by faith, we have peace with God*. Where there's peace, there's *grace and holiness*: *there's no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*. Where there's peace, there's *love and good will*. As love, so peace is the union of hearts. The God of peace is with you, signifies no less than this, The Almighty God bears you good-will. These two, peace and good-will, are *Twins*: *On earth peace good-will towards men*. Where there's peace, there's *life*, everlasting life internal is the seed of eternal peace.

This peace is a portion; peace with God is our possession of the God of peace: This peace is a Sanctuary if the God of peace be with us, the peace of God will keep our hearts.

Christians, in the world you must have trouble; suppose you have, yet in him you shall have peace, who hath overcome the world, *Isa. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace* (in peace, peace, as 'tis in the Original) *whose mind is staid on thee, Psal. 85. 8. I will bear what the Lord God will speake, he will speake peace to the people and to his Saints.* What a clattering is there in the world? what tumults and commotions are raised about the followers of Christ, as if the world were falling about their ears? The Devil speaks wrath, evil men speake death and bonds to them, breathing out Threatnings, Reproaches, Persecutions against them. In the midst of all this fearful noise, He hearken, saith the *Psalmist*, what the Lord God will speake. Whatsoever Men or Devils speake, He hearken, if the Lord God speake at the same rate. Oh no, he will speake peace to his Saints: Let the Sons of contention do what they can, the Sons of God shall be the Sons of Peace; they shall live in peace, they shall die in peace, they shall dwell in peace for ever, *Isa. 32. 17, 18. The work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness, and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places: Oh how great is the peace that they have who love thy law!* Christians, fear not to follow God: let not that sad word, nor the fulfilling of it, scare you out of your duty, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.* What if they do? whilst you are able to say, I am persecuted but I have peace; I am poor, but I have peace; in a Prison, but I have peace; in a Wilderness, but I have peace: though all the world be against me, God is at peace, my soul is in peace; what discouragement should all that be to you?

2. He that is the God of peace, is the God of power.

He

He promises peace, and he promises no more than he can perform. He can create peace, he can make their enemies to be at peace with them: he can make a leagu for them with the Beasts of the field, with the Lions, with the most brutish among the people: he can say to the Proud winds and waves, Peace, be still, and they obey him: he can give them rest from the dayes of adversity: he can give them rest in the dayes of adversity: he can give his beloved sleep upon the points of Swords and Spears.

3. He that is the God of peace, is the *God of patience*. This is my great fear, that though God gives, yet I shall break my peace; The God of Peace with me! oh! this is he whom I dishonor and disoblige daily, by my distrusts, discontents, impatiencies, murmurings, and what peace to such an heart? what peace, so long as such unbelief, so much iniquity as I find daily within me, remains upon me? Will he, with whom no iniquity can dwell, dwell in that heart where there is so much iniquity, by which he is provoked every day! but he that is the God of peace, is also the God of Patience, who though he will not bear the iniquities of his adversaries, yet he will bear much with the infirmities of his people, *Psal. 89. 30, &c. If his Children forsake my Law; and Walk not in my Judgment; if they breake my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with a Rod and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness wil I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*

4. He that is the God of peace, is the *God of hope*. I have not peace in possession, whatever there be in the promise, I live in the fire, am born a man of contention. What likelihood is there that I should ever live to see a good day? my comforts are broken, my Estate is lost, my Liberty is gone, Friends I have none, Ene-

mies I have many, and mighty, I dwell in *Mefech*, I have my habitation in the Tents of *Kedar*; I am for Peace, they are for War: whither ever I look, round about me, before me, behind me, on the right hand, or on the left, all speaks trouble and terrour to me, I have no peace; what, nor no hope of peace neither? where is thy God man? hast thou a God in thee, and yet no hope in thee! The God of peace, and yet no peace! The God of hope, and yet no hope! The God of hope will yet fill thee with joy and peace in believing, Rom. 15. 13. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God, Psa. 43. 11. The God of hope will open a window of hope in the darkest times, a dore of hope in the most desperate cases. The God of hope will bear up the spirits of his Saints, in hope against hope; and this hope will never disappoint them. It shall never be said there is no peace, there is no hope, till it can be said, there is no God in *Israel*.

But how, or in what sense is it to be understood, that this God of peace will be with us.

I answer, in three particulars.

1. The heart of God will be with you. *Joseph's* blessing, the good will of him that dwelt in the Bush, will be thy portion, Deut. 33. What was the Bush? the Church, or *Israel* of God? What case was the Bush in? 'twas all on a light fire, 'twas all in a flame. Who was it that dwelt in the Bush? God was in the Bush, and that kept it from consuming, though not from burning. The good will of this God shall be with thee; his love, his favour, his care. I love them that love me, Prov. 8. 17. The Lord loveth the righteous, Psa. 146. 8. The love of God is the womb of all good. Hence sprang the morning Star; from the love of God came the Son of God; hence

hence came that *womb* of the morning, the blessed Gospel, which is so big with glorious grace, with light, life, pardon, peace, glory, immortality; from the love of God came the glorious Gospel of God. *The upper Springs*, all spiritual and heavenly blessings, the *neiber Springs*, all earthly and outward blessings, do all rise, and bubble up out of this fountain, *the love of God*. *The precious things of heaven*, the *prceious fruits brought forth by the Sun*, the *precious fruits put forth by the Moon*, the *chief things of the ancient Mountains*, the *precious things of the lasting hills*, the *precious things ff the earth*, and the *fulness thereof*: All these flow in with the *good will of him that dwelt in the Bush*.

Love is all; the Apostle tell us, *Rom. 13*. our love to God, is *the fulfilling of the Law*: that is, it will bring forth all that to God, all that duty and obedience which the Law requires. I may tell you, that Gods love to us, is *the fulfilling of the Gospel*: that is, it will pour down all that upon us, it will do all that for us which the Gospel promises. Look over the whole Gospel, read, and study every precious leaf and line of that blessed Book: and if there be enough in all that to make thee blessed, and to encourage thee on in thy holy course, all this is thine. Thou hast that love of God with thee which will fulfill the Gospel: there shall not one jot or tittle fail thee of all that the Gospel promises. *The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this, Isa. 9.7.*

2. *The help of God* will be with you, the Lord will be your helper in the day of your distress, *Heb. 13.5, 6*. *He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*. So that we may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me*. He hath said, *I will not leave thee*: and therefore we may say, *I will not fear*. He hath said, *I will be*: and therefore we may

boldly say, *the Lord is my Helper*. He hath said, he will not forsake, he will help; and who is he that shall say, *There is no help for thee in thy God?*

There's no man, whose case may not be so desperate as to be above all humane help; if he should cry out, as the woman to the King of Israel, *Help O King*; the King must answer, *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?* If he should cry out, *Help O man of God*: the Man of God must answer, *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?* If he cry out, *Help O my Friends*, my Wit, my Policy, my Purse; all these must answer, *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall we help thee?* But what a case is there, wherein an [*Help Lord*] will not do?

Foolish men count their case desperate, when they come to their [*God help*] that's an usual expression to set forth the extremity and helplessness of any mans case. When we see men even lost in any misery, and their case even utterly hopeless, then to signify our sense of such mens lost condition, we cry out *God help that man, God help that woman, they are lost creatures* I, but if men did understand & consider what the help of the Lord is, they would see there could be no case so desperate, but an *help Lord* might recover all: 1 Sam. 30.6. when *David* was greatly distressed, and all was gone, *He encouraged himself in the Lord his God*.

Consider here two things:

1. What his case then was, he was in great distress; he had lost all that ever he had; his spoils that he had taken, were all gone, his Corn, and his Cattell, his Wives and his City were all lost, he had not an habitation in all the world; he had nothing left him but a poor Army, and these were worse than lost, they were even ready to fall upon him. *The people spake of stoning him but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God*.

2. What

2. What the event hereupon was, why God help'd him to all he had again, *vs. 19, There was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing they had taken: David recovered all.*

Hence note,

1. That a Christian when he hath lost all, hath yet a God to goe to at last.

2. Whilest a Christian hath a God to go to, his case is never desperate; let him but encourage himself in his God, and all will be recovered.

Sinners, triumph not over the poor people of God; when they are at their worst, when they are brought as low as your pride and malice can lay them; though they should be strip naked, & left destitute of all their comforts; though all the world should ride on their backs, and tread on their necks, yet rejoyce not against them; though they fall, they shall arise, when they are at their worst, there's still help for them in their God.

3. *The presence of the Lord shall be with them.* Whithersoever they may be scattered, they shall not be scattered from their God. That promise made to Moses, *Exod. 33. 14. My presence shall go with thee,* belongs to all the Israel of God, [*My presence*] in the original 'tis *my face*, in the Septuagint, *my self shall go with thee.*

The presence of God is either,
General, or Special.

By his general presence he is every where :

1. *Per essentiam*, he fills all things.

2, *Per Cognitionem*, he beholds all things.

3. *Per Sustentationem*, he upholds all things.

4. *Per Dominium*, he governs all things.

But to let this pass, as not so proper to our purpose.

1. There is his *Special*, or his gracious presence,

sence, whereby he manifests himself to be with his people.

1. In some *visible and standing tokens* of his presence, as in those extraordinary, the Pillars of the cloud, and of the fire: and in those ordinary, the Ark and the Temple of old, and the Ordinances of the Gospel now.

2. In some *inward influences* and irradiations upon the hearts of his people.

3. In some *visible and signal effects* of this presence, whereof there are very many. There are, amongst others, these two notable effects of Gods gracious presence, which his people, by vertue of this promise, may with confidence expect,

} Conduction.
} Covering.

They shall be *led* in their way, and they shall be *hid* in their way.

1. *Conduction*: The Lord will be with them to lead them and guid them in the way that they should go, *Psal. 25. 9, 12. The meek will be guide in judgment, the meek will be teach in his way, Psal. 107. 7. He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a City of habitations, Psal. 5. 8. Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy way strait before my face.*

The Lord leads his people in their way, chiefly by his *Word*, which is *a light to their feet, & a lanthorn to their paths*: And sometimes also by his *Providences*, hedging up all by-ways, and leaving but one way open to them, that hath the least appearance of the way of God; so ordering the matter, that any other way that is before them, looks with too foul a face to leave any doubt upon them, whether that be the way of God or not.

It's never uncomfortable to the people of God, while they see their way before them: *doubts* about their way are

are more perplexing than *dangers* in their way. When they know what God would have them do, they can cheerfully trust in him for any thing they are like to suffer. Dost thou meet with Wolves or Lyons in thy way? Thou mayst bless God 'tis there thou meetest them, it would be ill meeting them else where.

2. *Covering*, or protection in their way, *Psal. 31. 20.* *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man, thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues* [Thou shalt hide them in thy presence] or face: thy light shall be their dark place to cover them: *Thou art my hiding place. Psal. 32. 7.* [In the secret of thy presence] the Saints hiding place is a secret: Such, where neither the pride of men can find them, nor can they understand what it is. Reproaches shall not find them, Persecutions shall not find them, whose souls are hid in God: they are not found when they are found; they are hid, when they seem to lie most open, and most exposed to mens will and lust. Sinners do not understand what refuge the Saints have in God; it is a great secret a mystery to them; as the joy of the Saints, the comforts of the Saints are a secret; *A stranger shall not meddle with his joy:* So is there safety or security; they do not understand what kind, nor how great security; what sure, nor what sweet repose the Saints find in God. The secret of Gods Presence is a sure & a sweet resting place for all his Saints; but how sure, and how sweet, no man knows, but they that enjoy it. The *secret intimations* of the care of God for them, of his everlasting kindness to them of his governing hand in all that befalls them, working it to their greater good; the *secret supports* and refreshings darted in as the beams of his countenance; their *secret sense*, that their head, their main is in safety, though they have bruises in their heel, will yeild such
rest

rest in the day of greatest adversity, as men can neither see, nor take from them. The Pillar of the cloud interposed, did both hinder the *Egyptians* pursuit, and hide from their eyes the comfort of that light which shined upon the Camp of *Israel*. *Moses* knew what the comfort of Gods presence meant, when he said, *Exod. 33.15. If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence.*

'Tis (if considered) a great word. *Israel* was then in a Wilderness, among wild Beasts, among briars and thorns, in a weary pilgrimage; but they had God among them. The Lord was carrying them to *Canaan*, the Land of their rest, a Land flowing with milk and honey: but *Moses* prays, *If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence.* We had rather be where we are, in a Wilderness with God, than to go to *Canaan*, and leave our God behind us, *If thy presence go with us, we are willing to go, when thou wilt, whither thou wilt, which way thou wilt; though by the Tents of Edomites, Ishmaelites, Moabites, Hagarens; though through the Armies of Anakims, Zamzummims: we'll go any whither, so God go with us.* The absence of God makes a *Canaan* worse than a Wilderness, the presence of God makes a Wilderness better than a *Canaan*; and this presence of God shall be the lot of all his Saints.

Reas. 2. If God be with you, all shall make for you: All Providential Occurrences and Events whatsoever; All difficulties, straits, disasters, disappointments whatsoever, that may come upon you, shall make for your good, *Rom. 8.31. If God be with us, who can be against us? Who can be against us? that is, None can be against us: Or if any be, yet those that are against you shall be for you, Gen. 42.36. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not (said old Jacob) and mult Benjamin away too? All these things are against me but yet as old as he was, he lived to see all making for him, Rom. 8. 26. We know all*

all things shall work together for good to those that love God. This is such a promise, as if it were thoroughly believed, would set our feet on the necks of all our fears and dangers, and will prove the truth of *Samsons* riddle, *Out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong, sweetness.*

Now because there is so great encouragement to godliness in it, I shall spend the more time in enlarging upon it, and shall shew.

1. What those things are which are especially intended in that comprehensive term (*all things.*)

2. What that good is which these things shall work to.

3 To whom these things shall work for good.

4 How these things shall work for good.

5 That they shall undoubtedly work for good to them that love God.

1. What those things are which are especially intended in that comprehensive term (*all things.*) Some there are, as *Augustine*, with others, who understand it *universally*, of all things whatsoever, whether good or evil, extending it even to the *sins of the Saints*. It's true, God doth often bring good out of these evils making use of former sins to be forces against future, as the thorn that did hurt in the garden, will be of use in the hedge; sin often becomes it's own death, which was intended to be the death of the soul: There's nothing that doth make the sinner more weary, and wary of sin, than sin it self: The review of what we have done, doth ofteneft fright us off doing so any more. When you look back on sin, and see it's face, (for sin carries its face in its back) you'l fear it the more, when ever you meet it again. There's no argument doth more effectually humble, and break the heart, and make it more fearful and watchful against sin, than the shame, and

and the smart of those sins we have fallen by : he that hath felt the wound, will take heed how he plays with edge-tools. This is true, God doth often make this use of sin to be its own cure; and therefore 'tis not seldom seen, that the *chief of Sinners* have come to be the *chief of Saints*. Yet, besides, that this is not the subject matter that the Apostle is here treating of; 'er those that bring sin within the compass of this promise, and make this to run into the sense of it, that even all the sins of the Saints shall work for their good; let such tell us how, or in what way it's imaginable that the *sinful decayes* of such who back-slide from God, and never recover to their former life and vigour, but live and die in a languishing state of soul; let them tell us how such sins can be imagined to work for their good? till then, we must enter our dissent from this interpretation.

This then is not the sense of the promise, that all sins shall work together for good.

And yet if it were, it would be but a poor argument to take the more liberty to sin, because God will turn it to good; this would be even as rational, as for a man to rear his flesh, break his bones, pluck out his eyes, burn his house, &c. because God will turn all his sufferings to good: he is little better than mad, that would not conclude such a man out of his wits.

Others restrain it to the *evil things* that befall the Saints, not the *turpia*, but the *tristia*, their sufferings & afflictions; to that vanity and those vexations they are in bondage under, and under which with the whole Creation they groan and travel in pain, waiting for their redemption, of which the Apostle had been treating in the former part of the Chapter. And yet while they pitch the sense especially on such things as these, they grant it may be extended to all other things, sin
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only excepted; *ad omnes res, creaturas eventus, tum secundos, tum adversos*, to all things and events, whether prosperous or afflicting. So *Parens*, with others.

And these I take to have hit the right. All heavy things, all the sufferings and afflictions of the Saints; and not only these, but all things else whatsoever, that in the whole course of Providence be their lot or portion; all the dealings of God with them, all the dispensations of Providence towards them, shall all work for their good.

2. What is that good which these things work to the Saints; or in what sense all things may be said to work good to them. The sense in general is this, They shall all work to their welfare, they shall all happen to them for the better; there shall nothing befall them, but one time or other they shall have reason to say, 'twas well for me that it was thus with me. The wisdom and goodness of God did cut out such portions continually for me, did lead me thorow such a *series* and succession of cases and events, which though I could not understand, yet now I see that every condition, every contingency and occurrence of my life, through which Providence led me, was useful, and could not well have been wanted, but it would have been the worse for me. Thus in the general.

Particularly, for the fuller understanding what good it is that all things, to consider, That there is a twofold good of the Saints; such as they obtain and enjoy whilst they are *in via*, in their way or course; or such as they shall obtain when they are *in termino*, when they are gotten to the end of their way, when they are come to their place. Or thus, there is a threefold good of the Saints, Temporal, Spiritual, Eternal.

1. *Temporal good*, or our *bona corporis*, the outward good things of this life, which may serve and please,
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and delight us in these dayes of our pilgrimage, which may abide with us, and attend us to our graves, but there will take their leave of us.

2. *Spiritual good*, or our *bona anima*, and those are either, 1. External, as the ordinances of God; the Light, Liberties, and Priviledges of the Gospel; the Society and communion of Saints, and our peaceful and plentiful enjoying of them. 2. Internal, as spiritual grace, faith, love, hope, patience, &c.

3. *Eternal good*, or that glory and joy, that everlasting rest and peace, the possession of that inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that is reserved in Heaven for us.

Now here note these things;

—1. That our *bona corporis*, our outward good things, are only good for us, as they are conducive *ad bonum spirituale*, to the good of our souls, The *bona via*, are only good in the event, when they tend to the *bonum Patrie*. This World is but a Nursery for Eternity; we are planted in this, in order to our transplanting into the other World, and whatever we have here, is either good or evil, according to the respect that it bears to hereafter: as far forth as our immortal part is improved by these perishing things, so far forth only are they good for us. He that hath this worlds goods, and is not hereby made more rich towards God; he who prospers in this world, and yet his soul doth not prosper: much more, he whose worldly fulness becomes the empriness and leanness of his soul: Are these good things good for him? Is he in prosperity upon a true account, whose soul prospers not? it is not ever good to prosper in the world; it cannot be universally said, It's good to be rich, its good to be in health, its good to be in honour, its good to be at liberty: the contrary may sometimes be true; it's good to be poor, to be sick, to be

be in disgrace, to be in bonds; the necessity of our souls doth not seldom require it: Then alone is it good to be full and to abound, when our outward abundance fardhers our spiritual welfare.

Christians, could we receive this Truth, That our outward good things are only good for us, as far forth as they conduce to our spiritual good, could we receive this Truth, and live under the power of it, what a different judgment should we then have of all these worldly matters, from what we have! and how strangely would the course of this World be then changed? Would there then be such violent and eager pursuing these carnal things? Would there then be such Whining and complaining, and murmuring at every cross providence? We would then say, This may be good for me, good for my Soul, how sad soever it looks.

2. That the external spiritual good things the Ministry and Ordinances of the Gospel, &c. are so far good to us, as they conduce to our internal spiritual good: and they being ordinarily so, it must be concluded, that ordinarily it is good for us that we enjoy them, and be not deprived of them. God may see the cutting Christians short of these Priviledges and Liberties, to be sometimes needful for them; and then even this also makes for their good, whereof more anon.

3. That our inward spiritual good is good for us, so far forth as it tends to our eternal good; and therefore grace is ever good for us, It's ever true, it's good to be holy, good to be humble, to be in fear of God, and to flourish in his grace. We may have too much money, too much credit, but we can never have too much grace. Our greatest flourishing & fruitfulness in grace, will certainly abound to our more full reward.

4. Note, That this is the plain sense and meaning of the promise, *All things shall work [for good]* that is,

whatsoever befalls, shall certainly promote our internal and eternal welfare and as far forth as the outward priviledges of the Gospel, yea, and the good things of this Life, conduce towards this, all shall work for these also. If it be good for us to be rich, if it be good for us to be in honour, good for us to be at liberty ; good for our souls, good in reference to our eternal estate; if it be good for us that we enjoy the Ministry of the Gospel, there shall nothing befall us that shall hinder; there shall be nothing wanting to us that might further this our good.

The sum is, That all providential dispensations shall be so ordered, that we shall want nothing but what its better want then have: We shall suffer nothing but what we cannot well be without, but what the good of our souls requires: and that which we do possess, and that which we do suffer, shall not fail of bringing about its end, the advancing our eternal good.

And if this be the meaning, what a glorious promise is this ? what can any rational man desire more ? nothing shall befall him, but shall be for his good: he shall be deprived or kept short of nothing, but what he had better be without than have. He that is unsatisfied with this promise, it is either from *Lust* or *Unbelief*; either he doth not believe that God is true, and will perform this Word, or else 'tis because his Lust must be satisfied, though with the denial of his Reason and Interest: he that desires an Estate in the World, Ease, Pleasure, Liberty, or any thing else upon any other terms: but as they may be for his real good, hath as much lost his wits, as his faith ; and he that will take upon him to know what's good for him better then God. may as well take upon him to govern the World. You may with as good reason desire a Feaver, or a Dropsie, that you may have the pleasure of your drink ; as for the
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pleasures that carnal things would bring you in, to desire them, when they would be a snare to your souls.

3. To whom these things shall work for good : *To them that love God* : to them that are called according to his Purpose : To the people of God, who, you see, are here described by their *Election* and *Vocation* [the called according to his purpose] and their *Sanctification* [they that love God.] Love is, as I told you before, the fulfilling of the Law. Love God, and you will live in the obedience of his whole will : these are the people to whom this Promise is made ; prove your Calling and Election, prove your Sanctification, and you may write your names in this glorious promise : *All things shall work for your good.*

To those that are Rebels and Reprobates from God, all things shall work together for evil. Whilst things hurtful work together for good to the Saints, all good things work together for the hurt of sinners : their peace hurts them, their plenty hurts them, their pleasure hurts them : yea both their prosperity and adversity ; their plenty, and their poverty, their pleasure, and their trouble ; their honour and disgrace, and every thing that befalls them, turns to their prejudice. Their prosperity destroys them, their Table is their Snare their Pleasures ; are their Plagues, are their very punishments are turned into sin : every thing that befalls them, heightens and hardens them in their wickedness, and ripens them for vengeance. God is not with them, and therefore nothing prospers with them. God is with his Saints, and therefore nothing comes amiss to them, but all for their greater advantage : Christians, this is your portion, and your peculiar, wherein the men of this world shall neither partake with you, nor ever be able to deprive you of it.

4. How all things shall work for their good, in special,

cial, how shall the *evil things*, the sufferings of this Life be for their good? how can this be? must we disbelieve our Senses, lay down our Reasons, ere we can believe the Scriptures? Must we call evil good, & good evil? Must we count darkness light, and light darkness? Is pleasure pain, and pain pleasure? Is loss gain, and gain loss? Is ease torment, and torment ease? Doth Religion make things cease to be what they are, and to be what they are not? or at least, Must we believe that Darkness is the *Mother* of light, that Good is the *Daughter* of evil? Can we gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Can darkness give light, or death it self bring forth life? Must we say that contraries no longer destroy, but produce each other; and that the womb brings forth its own destruction? How can these things be?

But must God give a reason of his actions, or else they are not? though evil cannot bring forth good, darkness cannot bring forth light, yet, cannot God bring forth good out of evil, light out of darkness? Though darkness cannot bring forth light, evil cannot bring forth good by a natural causation, yet, cannot God make evil an occasion of good? Though it do not work *efficiently*, yet can it not work *objectively* neither to it? Though the torment the medicine puts men to be not ease, yet, may it not work toward ease? May not the storm, though it help not, yet hasten the Labourer on his work, the Traveller on his way? May not the darkness of the night make us more diligent in the day? May not sickness teach men more temperance, and poverty more frugality?

But to proceed more distinctly, *How can the Saints evil things work to their good?* That they do so, cannot be denied, unless we will deny not only Scripture, but common sense and experience: but how comes it to pass? I answer, in four particulars, 1. The

1. The afflictions and tribulations of the Saints, are the way that leads them on to the possession of that good which God hath intended to them; afflictions are the way of the Kingdom; the cross is the way to the Crown, *Act. 14. 22. Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God. Ps. 66. 11. 12. Thou broughtest us into the Net, thou hast laid affliction upon our loins, thou hast caused men to ride over our heads, we went through fire and water, thou broughtest us into a wealthy place.*

Observe it, Their troubles are their way to their triumph; their very falling into the Net, their way to escape. Their Enemies boast, Escape! Arise! yes, let them free themselves with such hopes while they will, we have them sure enough, we have them under foot, we have them in the Net. If this be their way, we'll keep them in their way long enough; now we have them down, they shall not be able to rise. I, but yet it appears through all this the Lord led them forth into a wealthy place. The high-way of the proud is not their more ready way to the dust, than the dust of Saints is their sure way to honour. When *Israel* were to go to *Canaan*, they must take the Brick-kilns, the Red Sea, the Wilderness, *Jordan* in their way: Could any one have imagined that the bondage, the straits they were under, the doubling their tasks, the cruelty of their Task-masters, their enclosures at the Red Sea, did mean any good to them; yet, how fell it out at last, their darkest dispensations had light in their latter end; their greatest bondage leads on to their greatest liberty.

Every cross providence is a step to the accomplishment of the promise, the wheel is ever moving on to its end, it moves still forwards, even when it seems to go quite backwards: as the River by its many turnings and windings forwards and backwards, is still in

motion to the Sea, when it seems to be running quite contrary,

Christians, if ever the salvation of God seems to be removed farther off from you; if the work of God should at any time seem to go backwards; if cross winds should turn the whole course, so that you appear rather to be marching back into *Egypt*, than on to *Canaan*; yet be not discouraged, though your way be an unlikely & unpromising way, though you be led about forwards and backwards, yet still you are making on: though the lesser wheels, be never so cross & contrary in their motions, yet the great wheel is still moving right on to your blessed and hoped end. God intends your good, your spiritual good here, your eternal good hereafter: and believe it now, for he will let you see it hereafter; that those very things which most threaten your miscarriage, and a total abortion of your hopes, are made all to concur to the bringing them about, and to your more full and speedy possession of them.

Note farther here two things:

1. All things work; not they shall work *de futuro*, but *de presenti*, they do work; as the Apostle says, *The Mystery of iniquity*; so we may say, *The Mystery of the Saints redemption doth already work*; the work is already on the wheel, and every wheel is in its motion for you; not only your Brethren the Saints and Angels, who are all praying for your peace, and seeking your good; but your Enemies also, the Dragon, with all his Armies are at work for you; all the Councils of this world are already sitting upon the very matter: God hath called them together for this purpose, the Pope, with all his Conclave; the Jesuits, Priests, Monks, and Friars, with all their Covents; yea, the Devil, with all his Conclave of Hell, are all at work for the good of Saints. It's true, they mean not, nor intend any such thing,

thing, their designs are against you; they count they are working for themselves; as 'tis said concerning the *Assyrian*, *Isa. 10. 6, 7.* God sent him forth upon a design of his own, to execute his council in the punishing of *Hypocrites*, to purge out the chaff from the wheat; *nevertheless he meaneth not so, nor doeth his heart think so:* the *Assyrian* minds not what Gods design is, but follows his own design, fights for himself, and spoils for himself, but Gods design is still carried on by him, though he think not of it.

All the *Events* in the world are driving the same way; every disease or infirmity that comes upon you, every loss that you sustain, every scoff or reproach that you suffer; the shame in your faces, the sorrow of your hearts, the torment in your bowels, the aches in your bones, are all working your good. *All the changes* of your conditions, your fair weather and your foul; your Sunshine and your clouds, your plenty and your wants, your eases and your pains, your liberties and your Prisons, are all making for you, your good is *already* working by all these things.

See Christians, what an harvest of blessedness is growing up to you, out of this *Promise*; the *Seed* is already sowing, your good is already working; God is at work, the whole Creation is at work, Men and Angels, good men and evil men, friends and enemies, heaven, and earth, and Hell, are already engaged to work your good.

2. They work together, that is as some understand it, they work together with God; all the second causes work together with the first cause, or as others, they work together among themselves. There is such a concatenation and concentrating of all these second causes in the same design, that however they seem to thwart and cross, and destroy some of them, what the others build and advance, yet they are all united in their end

they joyntly contribute to the weal of the *Saints*.

Though, if I mistake not, this latter be the more sense of the two, yet I know no reason why both may not be understood. In the hand, and under the conduction of *Providence*, all these lower things concur and co-operate in the good of the Church.

By the way, observe what an harmony there is in all the works of *Providence*: The most cross and thwarting *Occurrences* do all conspire and go hand in hand to bring about the same end. As the differing vertues of various drugs do all concur to make up the medicine: As the differing sound of several strings or instruments do altogether make up the melody: As the differing colours in a picture, the dark as well as the brighter, do jointly contribute to the beauty of the piece; no less do the most contrary and contradictory actions and events, both make up the beauty of *Providence*, and jointly subserve that one end, to which, by an unseen hand, and an all-seeing eye, they are directed and intended.

2. The *evil things* that befall the *Saints*, come upon them to keep out worse things. Wherever the cross comes, if it had not come, something worse might: The Cross may be a means to secure from the Curse: The Curse was slain on the Cross of Christ; and our Cross also hath its use to the delivering us from it. 1 Cor. 11. 32. *We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world; Periissem nisi periissem: I had died if I had not suffered; 'Tis more mens cases besides his that spake it; 'tis no bad exchange, to have a Cross instead of a Curse.*

3. The *evil things* of the *Saints*, prepare them for better things: hat they may work good for them, they are working them to good; working out their sin and iniquity, wearying them of sin, Hos. 2. 6. *I will hedge up*
her

*her way with thorns; then shall she say, I will return: Sin brought in afflictions into the world, & afflictions help to carry sin out; the Cross to which sin was once nail'd, is now nail'd to sin: the Saints can seldom be meddling with sin, but they find it too heavy for them; the Cross that is nail'd at the farther end of it, makes it a burthen which they cannot bear. In some sense, not only the blood of the Lamb, but the blood of the Sheep may purge away sin: though only the *προσέγκυατα* & *εὐχ* can expiate and take away the guilt, yet the *ὑσεγκυατα* may have their place in purging away the filth of sin: *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.* Our Lord beats the Devil with his own weapons, by those very means, purging his Saints, by which he endeavours to pollute them, making those very persecutions, by which he labours to force them from holiness, to fix them in it; a fawning World does them more mischief than a fuming Devil. By that the Devil hath cast up his Cards, he will find himself a loser by all his rage.*

Christians, comfort your hearts; those floods that are cast forth against you, shall but wash you the whiter, and make you more meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light: your Purgatory prepares you for your Paradise, no unclean thing must enter in thither: and you are not like to be made so clean, as by falling into the hands of the unclean. The Saints never look so well, like sheep come from the washing, as when they come up from the Pots; their very black makes them comely.

Oh Christians, what a comfort would it be, if your Experiences might come in and seal to this Truth: If you could say, *Thus it hath been with me; Before I was afflicted I went astray, I was proud, and vain, and wanton, and slothful, and carnal, but now I have kept thy Word.*

Sin-

Sinners, whatever your mind be in persecuting the **Saints,** never think to debauch them by it; if that be your aim, you mistake your course; the living spark which God hath kindled in them, will not be blown out, but be blown up by your puffing at it; the dirt you cast upon them, doth but scour them the brighter: You take the best course you can to keep them closer to the Lord, and his way: The warm Sun will more hazard the loss of their garments, than the blustering wind. Let them alone, the Spirit of the Lord within them will be too hard for Hell, with all its black Regiments; and will not only secure them, but advance them yet higher by all their assaults. These Stars shine the brightest, when the Night is darkest; when you have done your worst 'twill be the better with them; though they will not thank you, yet they will thank God for what they have suffer'd by you. If this be your aim, to make them like your selves, you may set your hearts at rest and give over such a vain attempt: Your fury is like to do as little to force them, as your virtues are to invite them to a compliance with you. Your faces are too foul to draw them into your love, and yet not fierce enough to drive them into your fear. Satan, try thy utmost strength and skill, and if thou lovest not by thine own play at last, if thou findest not the poor people of God gotten nearer Heaven by thy attempts of plucking them down to Hell, then let thy Lies be believed, before the everlasting Gospel.

Christians, make me not ashamed in this same confident boasting of you: yea, contradict not your God, by suffering your selves to be corrupted by evil men. The Lord himself hath adventured deep upon your integrity and steadfastness: The honour of his Truth and Faithfulness lies at stake, he hath said, *They shall not be afraid of any evil tidings, their heart is fixed, trusting in the*

the Lord. Psal. 11. 7. He hath said, By this shall their iniquity be purged, and this shall be all the fruit, to take away their sin. God hath said, all things shall work together for good to them. They shall not be the worse, but the better, for all that befalls them: They shall love me, and my holy ways the more, they shall cleave unto me the closer, they shall be made more Pure, and more tender, by all they suffer for Righteousness sake; they shall love Conscience, and their integrity, and Faithfulness to it never the worse, for that it hath cost them so dear; but shall prize it the more, and be the more wary and tender how they pollute and turn aside from it. God hath adventured deep on you, make not him a Lyar; the Devil and his Instruments will be ready to say concerning you, as once he did to the Lord concerning his servant Job; put them into our power, let us have the handling of them a while, and thou shalt quickly see what truth there is in them or what trust there is to them; they'll curse thee to thy face, they'll deny thee to thy face, they'll eat their own words, they'll be ashamed of their God, their Godliness, and Confidence. Let God be true, Christians, and the Devil a Lyar; be living Commentaries on this Blessed Text: Let the world and their black Prince see, that they cannot make you miserable, because they cannot make you sinners like themselves: That you are still the more upright for falling into the hands of a crooked generation: Let them see, that though your God will not suffer you, yet you are contented to serve him for nothing. That though his hedge be removed from you, yet your heart is not removed from him: Be able to say, Though all this be come upon us, our heart is not turned back, neither have we declined thy way.

Let our standing and increasing in the grace of God, and abounding in the works of righteousness, be

A Standing Witness for God in the World, and a seal to his Scriptures, and in special to the glorious Truth of this Text.

4. *The evil things of the Saints prepare better things for them, their sufferings go into their reward: As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.* Every suffering comes with a comfort in its belly, and the sweet is so great, as swallows up the bitter; tis a hundred fold that the Saints gain by all their losses in this life, but how great shall their reward be in heaven, 2 Cor. 4. 17. *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory.* They shall not only have weight for weight, measure for measure, their load of glory for their load of sufferings, but they shall have over-weight, over-measure, good measure, pressed down, heaped together, and running over, shall then be given unto them: according to their deep poverty, shall be the height of their riches; according as their blackness hath been in their houses of bondage, shall be their brightness in the Land of promise; *for all thy shame thou shalt have double:* The double of thy reproach in renown, the double of thy tears in triumphs, all thy bottled tears shall be returned in Flagons of joy, yea, in Rivers of eternal pleasure.

By this time, Christians, you see what glory there is in this good word: *All things shall work together for good to them that love God.* And that none may have the face to say, all this is but conceit, I shall, in the next place, bring in clear and undeniable evidence, that it is certainly and unquestionably so as hath been said: And therefore know,

5. That all things do, and shall certainly work for good to them that love God. This (besides the testimony of this Scripture) I shall make evident from these three Propositions.

1. There

1. There is a *divine providence* that governs the world
 2. The design of *Providence*, is the accomplishment of the good purpose and promise of God.

3. The *Providence* of God shall never fail of accomplishing its end.

1. There is a *divine Providence* which governs the World: the *Epicureans*, who deny *Providence*, and leave all on *Chance* and *Fortune*, may as well deny that there is a God, which yet they are ashamed to stand to. Of *Epicurus* himself it was said, *Quem nihil pudendum pudet, pudet tamen Deum negare.*

It can be no way reconcileable to the infinite wisdom of God, who made this glorious Fabrick, with the various Creatures therein, either not to determine them to their ends, or else to take no care for their accomplishing those ends they are determined to. The whole current of Scripture is so plain in these matters, that he that runs may read: Let the following Scriptures, amongst others, be considered.

Psal. 97. 1. The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce, let the Isles be glad. Psal. 67. 15, 16. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season: Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desires of every living thing. Psal. 36. 6. Thou preservest man and beast. Psal. 75. 6, 7. Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South; but God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another. Amos. 3. 6. Shall there be evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it? Psal. 17. 13, 14. Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy Sword; from men, which are thy hand. The confessions of those Infidels, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, speak the same, Dan. 4. 35. All the Inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will, in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the earth, and none

none can stay his hand, and say unto him, What dost thou? Dan. 6. 26. I make a Decree, that in every Dominion of my Kingdom men tremble, and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever; and his Kingdom that, which shall not be destroyed; and his Dominions shall be even unto the end; he delivereth and rescueth; and he worketh signs and wonders in Heaven and earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the Lyons.

But more distinctly, the Lord governs all inanimate and sensitive Creatures in their actions; he orders the Stars in their courses. The Stars in their courses, he made to fight against Siserah: he governs the winds and the floods; he bringeth forth the winds out of his treasures, he rides upon the wings of the wind, he maketh the clouds his Chariots, he sitteth on the floods, the Thunder and the Hail, and the Rain, and the Frost, are all at his command; he giveth Snow like Wool, and scattereth the hoary Frost like ashes: he casteth forth the Ice like morsels, he sets bounds to the Sea, which it shall not pass; the birds of the Air, the Beasts of the Field, the Fishes of the Sea, yea the stones and dust of the earth, are all at his beck.

More especially, he rules and governs the men of this world. He sits in all the counsels of men, though they see him not; he orders all their Decrees, there's no Decree can pass, unless God gives his vote. He rules in all the changes that are in the world, he changes the time and the seasons, he changes Kingdoms, and Governments; he removeth Kings, and setteth up Kings; he makes War, and creates Peace; he bendeth the bowe, and he breaketh the bowe; and curteth the Spear in sunder, and burneth the Chariots in the fire: Peace and War, Health and Sicknes, Plenty and Famine, Life and Death, are all the disposures of his hand, He orders all
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the events and casualties of the world, even from the greatest to the smallest. Without him, not a Sparrow shall fall, nor a hair of the head shall perish; though there be to men, yet to the Lord there are no casualties or contingencies: but all things come to pass according as his hand and counsel had before determined.

2. The design of Providence (as it respects the Elect) is the accomplishment of Gods good purpose and promise. Providence governs the World, and the purpose and promise governs Providence. All the works of Providence have *rationem mediorum ad finem*. God doth nothing in vain: it is not consistent with the wisdom of God, to do any thing for nothing. God would have his people look farther than the things that are before them, because all those things have a farther aspect themselves. All the works of Providence have a double aspect, they look backward to the purpose and promise; and they look forward to the end for which they are: As they look backward, so they have truth in them, exactly answering the purpose and promise from which they have their birth. As they look forward to their end, so they have good in them; and that good (their subservience to the end) is the reason of their being. Here note two things.

1. That the subserviency of things to their end, is the goodness of them; if the end be good, the means must (as such) be good also: If what God hath purposed and promised be good, then all things that fall in between, having the respect of means to their accomplishment, must upon that account be good. If our crosses and afflictions do subserve the bringing about of Gods good will and Good word, we must say concerning them, *Good are the works of the Lord*. It is not how any thing looks or feels at present, but what it means, and to what it tends. If the potion be bitter,
and

and yet it tends to health; if the Messenger be ill-look-
ed, and ill-favoured, and yet comes upon a good errand,
you may bid him welcome. And thus all the Provi-
dences of God are good. If you should ask of any Pro-
vidence, wherefore art thou come? *Comest thou Peace-
ably*, comest thou for good: they must all answer, *yes,
peaceably* for good, and no hurt. 'Tis but to help all
that good into thy hand, which hath been in the heart,
and hath proceeded out of the mouth of thy God that
loves thee. There is not a *Messenger of Satan* that
comes to buffet thee, but is also a *Messenger from God*,
that comes to thee for good. The very thorns in thy
flesh shall serve thee for plaisters, thine eye-sores shall
be thine eye-salve, & thy very maladies thy medicines.

2. That this Relative goodness of all the works of
Providence, is the reason of their being. Therefore
God doth what he doth, that hereby he may do what
he hath said and intended. I do not say, that the reason
of Gods taking this or that means, is always from any
thing in it self, or for his natural tendency to such an
end above any thing else; God hath his choice of
means, he can choose here or there at pleasure, can make
use of what he will to serve his design, but the reason
why things are, is this, God in his wisdom saw their *or-
dinability* to this good end, and thereupon in his Pro-
vidence he orders and brings them to pass.

So that now, whatever befalls a Christian, he hath
this to allay and take off the grievousness and sharp-
ness of it: This had never been, but for the good will,
and good word of the Lord to me. The Lord God hath
said he will bless me, and do me good; he will heal me,
and sanctifie, and save me, and now he is about it; by
this, he is working that salvation for me:

Christians, you have no reason to say. If the Lord
be with me, why am I thus, who so poor, why so pain-
ed,

ed, why so persecuted, so scorned and trampled upon? sure if the Lord had meant my good, 'twould have been better than 'tis with me. No, no, 'tis because the Lord is with thee, and means thee well, that he deals in this manner with thee. The design of his Providence towards thee, is the accomplishment of his promise.

3. The Providence of God shall never fail of accomplishing its end. There is nothing wanting that might give us the fullest assurance hereof. For,

1. The Providence of God hath *power* with it. He is the Almighty that hath promised, he that ruleth in the Earth, dwelleth in Heaven, and doth whatsoever he will. *Our God is in Heaven, and doth whatsoever he will. I will work, and who shall let it? Isa. 43.* Who can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou? were it not for our unbelief, our case would be still the same in greatest difficulties, as when the Coasts are most clear. We might say of difficulties, as the Psalmist of darkness, *There is no darkness with thee, to thee day and night are both alike.* Difficulties are no difficulties with thee, nor is there difference betwixt hard and easie. He can save with many or with few; and with none, is as well as with some. We once read he had too many, but never that he had too few to bring about his work. Oh how we do disparage the power of God, when our difficulties make us doubt! Is he God, and not man? Is he Spirit, and not flesh? Wherefore then dost thou doubt? Whatever God hath said, he can do: beleeve he is a God, and thou wilt never say, How can these things be?

2. The Providence of God hath *wisdom* with it: He is the only wise, he is the all-wise God, *He knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, 2 Pet. 2. 9.* He knoweth what is good for his Saints, & when 'twill be in season; he understandeth what is proper & pertinent to every case, what's proper to every purpose, to every

people, to every person, and for every season; he knows when 'tis a season to abase, and when to exalt; when to afflict, and when to deliver; when to put on the yoke, and when to take off the yoke; when to pull down, and when to build up; every thing is beautiful in its season. If mercies come *out of season*, mercies would be no mercies; and if troubles come *in their season*, troubles should be no troubles: he knows the best method and means to his end; the fittest means, he sees sometimes the unfittest to be the fittest; the most unlikely, unpromising means, do often best serve Gods end.

Christians, if you would receive every dispensation as coming from the hands of the wise God, you would never quarrel with your lot, nor say of any thing that befalls, I might be happy, but this stands in my way. If you would give God leave to be wiser than you, you would say where-ever you are, *Its good for me to be here*; this is my way to my rest.

3. The providence of God hath *faithfulness* with it, *Psal. 25. 10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and [truth] to them that keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies. Psal. 111. 8. His works are done in truth.* Gods works may be said to be *done in truth*, in a double sense:

In Reality,

In Fidelity.

1. In *reality*, not in *specie*, or in shew only, but in deed. Gods comforts are comforts indeed; Gods salvation is salvation indeed. The Devil will come with his gifts, with his comforts and deliverances; but they are for the most part, but *spectra*, like himself, shews and apparitions, quite another thing than what they seem to be: sinners comforts, deliverances, enjoyments, where-with the Devil feeds them, do leave them in as poor a case, and worse than they found them: you will never thank the Devil for his kindness, when you have prov'd them

them what they are. If you do not find your selves as fast bound in the midst of all your liberties; if you be not wrapt up in as many sorrows, after all the joyes he hath procured to you; if the glittering glories, the glorying pleasures he entice you by, and entertains you with, be not trash and dirt, and meer lies in the end, then say, the Devil hath forgotten his Trade of lying: the Devils works will be even like himself, false and deceitful. But God is true, and all his works are done in truth.

2. In *Fidelity*; his works are according to his word, *1 King. 8:24. Thou hast spoken with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled with thine hand, and in thy faithfulness thou hast afflicted me, Psal. 119.* Not only in thy faithfulness thou hast saved me, in thy faithfulness thou hast comforted me, in thy faithfulness thou hast succoured me: but in thy faithfulness thou hast afflicted me, in thy faithfulness thou hast humbled & broken me, & cast me down. The promise of God is that we shall want nothing we shall neither want his Staff, nor his Rod; neither comforts, nor crosses; neither joyes, nor sorrows; we cannot well want either, and we shall want neither, because God is faithful. You may not only write down with the Apostle, *God is faithful, & will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear*; but you may write also, *God is faithful and will not suffer you to want a temptation.* When 'tis seasonable, your hearts shall be glad; & if need be, for a season you shall be in heaviness: God is faithful, he will ever be true to himself, & therefore to you, *2 Tim. 2.9. He abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.* Should he be false to his people, he cannot be true to himself, to his purpose & promise; his word is not yea and nay. *God is not as man, that he should lye; or the son of man, that he should repent: that he should say and un-say, that he should say, and not do; you may*

write Gods Name upon every word he hath spoken; you may write his Name (*I am*) upon all that he hath said: It shall be.

Now Christians, put these three particulars together, and if you cannot spell out the conclusion of them, (*The Providence of God will certainly accomplish his good purpose and promise concerning you:*) you are of little understanding, as well as of little faith.

If God governs the World, and nothing comes to pass but by his providence; if Providence governs according to Gods purpose and promise, if Providence cannot fail of accomplishing both.

If God be *Almighty*, and can; if God be *Wise*, and knows how; if God be *faithful* and true; let the Devil if he can, with all his Sophistry, evade the conclusion, *That he will certainly do all that good for you which he hath purposed and promised:* If God be not able to perform, he is not good; if he mistake his way, if he use impertinent, improper means, he is not the All-wise God. If he do not actually perform what he is able, and knows how to do, when he hath said it, he ceases to be the true God: So that the matter is brought plainly to this issue; if God be God, if God be the all-wise God, if God be the True and Faithful God, this word which he hath spoken (*All things shall work together for good to those that love God*) shall not fail of its accomplishment in its season.

Having thus proved the Doctrine, I shall, after I have added a few words by way of Caution, and answered an Objection or two against the sense I have given of this Promise, and subjoyned a few particular Inferences, descend to the general Application.

I. By way of Caution.

1. *Limit not the Lord to your time and way;* God will make good his Word, but you must give him leave to
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take his own season. *He that believeth, shall not make haste:* Beleive God, but do not prejudge nor precipitate, lest you fall into temptation. Put no more into the promise, neither for matter nor circumstance, than God hath put in it: put not that into the promise, which God hath not put in it, lest you miss and come short of that which God hath put in it. Let others mistakes and miscarriages be warnings to you: till God hath manifestly said, do not you say, *This is the time;* build not your confidence on conjectures, your faith on the strongest presumptions, lest your faith prove but a fanfic, and your confidence your confusion: make not the promise of God of none effect, by looking for its effect out of season. Beleive not your selves into infidelity: Consider, *Act. 1. 7. It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which God hath put in his own power.* Study the Word and its Commentary, the Works of God, but be sober in your conclusions.

This you may safely depend upon, and this will be enough, if you have no more: God will make good his good word to you sooner or later, in one time or other, in one way or other; in the best time, in the best way, in the appointed time, the Vision shall speak, and not lye, *Habbak. 2. 3. Though it may tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, and will not tarry:* At least, at the end of the days, when you shall stand in your lot: when you shall be gotten on the banks of *Canaan*, and shall thence look back on the promises and providences of God, you shall see and say, God is faithful, there hath not failed one word of all that he hath promised: Now I understand, though once I could not, how every wheel was turning, every instrument was moving, every event was working toward my good, & everlasting welfare.

2. Let not your expectation cause an abortion. Let not your looking for mercy, hinder the working of your af-

Affliction: It is not seldom, and the Lord grant it be not too common a case, that our door of hope becomes a door of sin. We do not set our selves with that seriousness, to humble, to purge our selves from our iniquities, as we would do, did we apprehend our case more desperate: our cares and our sorrows have not their kindly work upon us, our hope hinders it. We might have been more broken-hearted, had it not been for our hopes of building up: as it is with a person who conceives himself to be dying, he then falls to praying and repenting, and setting his heart in order, because he must die: but upon a little hope of recovery, he lays by his dying thoughts and preparations.

Christians, Whenever you are under afflictions, take heed that your expectation of deliverance to be near, put it not so much the farther off. Watch narrowly over your selves, & look diligently to it, that your hope of Redemption do not harden your hearts, nor hinder your humiliation & repentance. Hope in God, and wait for the promise of his coming; but know, that till the rod hath done its work, it is not like in mercy to be laid by; and it's better to be continued in the Furnace, than to be brought forth with your dross unpurged away.

Against this blessed truth there are some objections: as,

Object. 1. *Can it ever be said, that the removal of the Gospel, and the preaching of it, can be for good?*

Sol. This is an hard truth, but yet a truth, that even this shall work for good to those that love God.

1. It's true, that the removal of the Gospel, and the Ministry of it, is a most grievous judgment: and that which carries with it a greater evidence of wrath, and divine displeasure against a people, than any thing that ever befalls them in this world. How great a judgment it is, we may guess, if we observe those Scripture-expressions

pressions by which its set forth: Its called the *famine of the Word*, Amos 8. 11. *The glory departed*, 1 Sam. 4. *The Kingdom of Heaven taken away*, Mat. 6. 41. *The Salvation of God sent away*, Act. 28. and can there any thing worse befall a People? a Soul-famine, an Eclipse of their spiritual glory, the shutting up of the Kingdom of Heaven, the carrying away of the salvation of God. What worse thing can come unto them? Its a great wonder there should be no deeper sense of this most dreadful of evils than is mostly found: Men little understand what they *do*, who either in a way of *merit*, or *instrumentally*, procure, and bring on this plague; and few understand, or are sensible what they herein *suffer*; to be an *instrument* in this hellish work, is an office for a *Devil*; and the *suffering* of such a plague (to them that understand it) is an *Hell above ground*. This darkness is the very same for kind, with the darkness of Hell; as the light of the Gospel is the same in kind with the everlasting light, as glory under age, so is this thick darkness, *in specis*, and *in semine*, the darkness of the pit. Oh, what an Hell of wickedness doth this World then become! the Devil is then in his Region, is let loose, rules the world at pleasure, deceives, devours, destroys souls without contradiction; takes them captive at his will, carries them down by whole shoals to destruction: Those that observe what a World there is, where the Gospel is not; what Oaths, Curses, Blasphemies, belluine Lusts then abound; what Lyons, Tygers, wild Bulls, wild Boats, Men then become one to another, need not be to seek for an Argument to prove there is an Hell, they see an Hell above ground.

These dark and dismal seasons are the Devils *Marts*; where he may vent his hellish wares, his snares & temptations, his deceits, and delusions, & every abominable thing *by whole sale*, there's nothing so false, so vile and

abominable, but he can put it off at pleasure; Adultery, Drunkenness, Witchcraft, Sodomy, Buggery, Blasphemy, Idolatry, Atheism, any thing that Satan hath to offer, he'll find Customers enough to receive: and the truth is, the *Devil* may spare his pains; men need not then a *Devil* to damn them, they'll do it fast enough of their own accords.

Oh, 'twere happy if *Saints* were so busie in improving their light, to hasten them Heaven-wards, as sinners do their darkness to hurry them to Hell! O the sad proofs that the world affords of this dreadful Truth! Look into all the dark corners of the Earth, especially there where there hath been light, and see if you find not all this fully proved to your hand. Can he then be accounted a Christian, whose heart doth not tremble at the thoughts and the fears of such a sore judgment? he is both dark and dead indeed, to whom such a mist is not as the first-born of Death, or the King of Terrors.

Christians, If ever this should be your case, make not light of it; and take heed, how sad soever it may seem in its first approach, that no tract of time do wear off the sense of it.

Those that are weary of the Gospel, that cry out of too much preaching, that are sick of the light that shines unto them, you may know by what hath been said, what judgment to have of them.

But is it not strange that there should be any such? That those that have lived in the light, and seen something, what difference there is between light and darkness, should yet love darkness rather than light? Is it not yet more strange, that any that pretend to be set up for lights, should be for darkness? That the *Prophets* should be against prophesying? That the *Pulpits* should ring against preaching? Some there are, that are not ashamed to tell us, that hence come all our mischiefs and
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miserics; to tell us, and to stand to it, that there's now in such a Land as this, little need of *preaching*; that it had its use in the first publishing & planting of the Gospel; but now that the Gospel is received and embraced, & competently understood, there's now little more need of *Preaching, Praying and Reading* may now serve the turn. I would put in a word or two to such.

No need of *Preaching*! Why? Is the end of *Preaching* accomplished? Till the end be attained, there's still need that the means be continued: And what was the end of *preaching*? Was it mens *instruction* only, to bring them to the knowledge of Christ, to turn them from darkness to light? Was it not for their *Conversion* also, to turn them from the power of *Satan* unto God? Yes, and their *Edification*, & building up in holiness to salvation? let these following Scriptures be consulted, *Act. 26. 18. Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13. The Apostle Peter, 2. Pet. 1. 12. 13.* told those Christians to whom he wrote, that he would, he thought it meet so to do, to put them in remembrance, as long as he lived, and to stir them up to their duty; though sayes he, *You know, and be established in the present truth.* You say, you need no more *preaching*, the *Preacher* can tell you no more than you know already, and might not these have better said it, when the Apostle acknowledgeth of them, that they did know, and more then that, were established in those very Truths, he meant to continue preaching to them? And yet he tells them, its meet they be still put in remembrance of them: Sure *Peters Authority* weighs not so much with these men, as his that pretends to sit in *Peters chair*: But hath the Gospel indeed done its work and reached its end? Witness the *Objectors* own cases. Let not only their *lewdness* and *impenitency*, but their *ignorance* and *unbelief*, come in and testify, whether it hath or no. They that have most need themselves, are they

they that say, *There's no more need of preaching.* There needs no more Argument to stop such mouths, but the shewing themselves: or if it should have done its work upon you, yet hath it done its work upon all? Are there no Unbelievers left? Have all men faith? *Faith comes by hearing, and how shall they hear without a Preacher?* If you say, they have *Bibles* to instruct them, and their own *Consciences* to preach to them, I answer:

First, for their *Bibles*, two things.

1. Those that are no friends to the Pulpit, are none of the best friends to the Bible: those that would not that the people should hear, care not how little they read the Scriptures: And be sure, when ever Preaching is let fall, the Bible will in a little while be laid aside.

2. Understandest thou what thou readest? How canst thou without a guide? He knows but little of the Scriptures, that doth not understand that they are hard to be understood. There are, the Apostle tell us, *συνώνια* in the Scriptures, things hard to be understood: as there are many *συνώνια* to all that read, so to many that read all are so. The Vulgar can as well read the Scriptures without their own eyes, as understand them without the Preachers lips. Till we come to hold, that *Ignorance is the mother of Devotion*; or that *Images are Lay-mens Gospel*; till then let it be granted as necessary, that the Preachers lips preserve knowledge.

Secondly, For *Conscience*: Let the Word at least be preached so long, till it be made manifest in the *Consciences* of all the Hearers: that *Conscience* that hath not been sufficiently preached to, will prove an insufficient preacher. Let preaching be continued till the Word be manifested in the *Consciences* of all the Hearers; and if you will needs have it so, then let it be forborn.

2. Hath the Devil yet given over preaching? and are the preachers yet silent? Hath the Devil yet given over his

his preaching, his deceiving souls, his perverting the good ways of the Lord, and discouraging Persons from walking in them? Sure there's need that Christ be preached, while there is a Devil that impeaches him. Hath the Devil them that preach him every day, & must not Christ have them that preach him, at least every Sabbath day? May *once a month, or once a Quarter* be enough for these, when every day, and all the day long, does scarce suffice for those? When, or where are evil men silent? Are they not preaching daily, in the House, in the Streets, in the Taverns, on the Stage, in the Scaus? Preaching by their Oaths, their Curses, by their Lies, by their Scoffs, by their Habits, by their Cups, by their Whores, and almost by all their words and works; And is there no need that Christ be any longer preached any where, when the Devil is preached every where? If in such a case the Preachers of Christ should altogether hold their peace, might we not expect, that the very stones would cry out? This is but a reasonable demand. Let Faith & Holiness, first, have none found that preach against them, before those that preach them, be concluded such as may well be spared. But what need we reason any longer in a case so plain, wherein I can have no adversaries but such as the Apostle had, when he fought with Beasts at *Ephesus*. Whosoever is an adversary to preaching, is either an Infidel or a Brute. I shall only leave one word for such to chew upon, & so leave them and their cause to the judgment of God, *Act. 13 46*: *It was necessary, that the Word of God should have bin first spoken to you; but because you put it from you, and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting Life, Lo we turn unto the Gentiles!* Let all back-friends to preaching pause sed-ly upon that word; you have prevented the judgment of God, by putting the word from you, you have given your selves your own Sentence, you have judged your selves

selves unworthy of everlasting life. Well, by what hath been said, notwithstanding all that can be said against it, it appears, That the removal of the Gospel, and the preaching of it, is a grievous judgment.

2. This grievous judgment shall yet work to the good of *Saints*: That which comes in wrath on some, may be in mercy to others: 'Tis the ignorant, the unconverted, the unbelieving part of men, on whom the vengeance of this judgment falls: 'Tis those that are weary of the Word, that can worse it. Sinners, you that say to the *Seers*, see not; to the *Prophets*, prophesie no more to us; let us alone, we have enough of this preaching: If God once say as you say, *Let it be according to their Word*, 'tis your souls are like to go for it: And tis not the least aggravation of the sorrows of the *Saints*, the misery they see hereby coming on you: As for themselves (that I may answer more distinctly)

1. The Gospel shall never be *totally* removed from them; they shall never see dayes of Famine: If they never again hear the joyful sound from without, they shall have it within. The word which they have received, shall be in them a Well of water springing up unto eternal life: if the Shows and the Rain fail, yet the Spring which is within them, shall supply that want: If they have no Bible in the house, no preaching in the Pulpit, yet they have a Bible in their hearts, a Preacher in their breasts, that shall instruct and comfort them. *Pharaoh's* dream, and the interpretation of it, shall be to the *Egyptians*, and not to *Israel*. The lean Kine shall not devour the fat ones; there is a *Store-house*, from whence they shall be supplied.

What ever scarcity there be, this is certain, not one of them shall want a *viaticum* to bring them to their journey's end. God will not suffer one of his Elect to starve or perish in the way: There shall not fail means of one kind

kind or another, till the whole body be perfected and built up: *Till (we all) come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

2. That *Scarcity* that does at any time befall them, shall happen to them for the better, and not for the worse.

1. For who knows, whenever the Ministry is removed, but it may be in order to a greater glory at its return? perhaps Gods sending away Pastors from a people, may be as *Pauls* absence from the *Romans*, that they may return in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel: Or as *Onesimus* his departing from *Philemon*: Perhaps they therefore depart for a season, that they may be received for ever: Or, if this should not be the case of any particular Church, if they should return no more; yet,

2. Their want of means, shall supply their want of means; their want of means shall be their means: When they have no *Preacher*, their empty Pulpits shall preach to them; this most smarting of rods will have its voice. If they have no longer the light with them, their darkness shall instruct them; if they want their [burning] Lights, the very cold shall preserve and increase their inward vigour; the wickedness of others shall make them more holy; the violence of evil men upon sin, shall enkindle their zeal for God; the darkness that's here below, shall make them to live more above, & all this shall make to their fuller reward. Tis a greater virtue to keep up the heart, to keep on our way, where there is a want, than where there are abundance of means & helps; & an higher virtue shall have a greater reward.

3. The failing of the word, will bring back to their memories, and upon their own hearts, that which they have received; and as the emptiness of the stomach will cause a second & better concoction, & turn it into better nourishment; when there are no more loaves, they'll gather

gather up the fragments that nothing be lost; the less there is, more to be had; the more reckoning, and the better use they will make of what they have; their present want will be a rebuke of their former wantonness; their want of Remembrancers, will help their memories, and whet their appetites. Every old truth that hath been too much laid by, will then be precious.

4. Whenever ordinary means fail, God will either find extraordinary, or else will feed them more immediately from himself. *Psal. 34. 9.* God hath promised, that *those that fear the Lord shall want no good thing.* If that be meant of temporal good things, yet sure it will yeild us an argument that will reach the present case. If God will provide for their Carcasses much more for their Souls. If God will supply them with less necessities, then doubtless he will not be wanting in what's absolutely necessary, *Psal. 23. 1, 2, 3.* *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,* and so on throughout the whole Psalm: *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the dayes of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

Here we have the *Psalmist's* conclusion, and its foundation; or his confidence, and its ground: his foundation or ground is, *The Lord is my Shepherd*; his conclusion or confidence is, *I shall not want*; that is, neither for body nor soul, as appears by the following part of the *Psalms*. If *David's* Logick and his faith too, does not fail him, the conclusion is firm; let the Lord be his Shepherd, & he shall not know famine or want.

Gods relation to his people, is their security for a sufficient provision in all times. If the Lord be their Shepherd, he must see them fed; he must either find them those that shall, or do it himself. He must either find them pastors, or be their pastors; he must either provide for them, or be their pasture. If ordinary means fail, he

he must find extraordinary ; if both fail, he must be instead of means to them. Hear two things :

1. That God stands engaged, as the Shepherd of his people, where ordinary means fail, either to provide them extraordinary, or to feed them more immediately from himself.

2. That extraordinary means, or no means, when God brings his people to it, will be better than their ordinary means.

1. That God stands engaged as the Shepherd of his people, where ordinary means fail, either to provide them extraordinary, or to feed them more immediately from himself. Feed them he must, or he cannot be faithful, and if means fail, he must supply that want one way or other. Now God is faithful and will not see his sheep to starve, *Isa. 41. 17, 18. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will bear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them, I will open Rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the Vallies; I will make the Wilderness a pool of water, and the dry Land springs of water.* Oh what a good World is here for the poor Saints to live upon in hard times! It is interpreted to have an immediate reference to the outward, and yet a special respect also to the spiritual wants and distresses. And it will appear, if we compare it with the like expressions, *Chap. 44. 3. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground, I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing upon thy off-spring.*

From the former Scriptures note,

1. That the poor people of God may sometimes be (as to the visible soul-provisions) but in a poor case, needy, & hungry and thirsty, their hearts fainting, their tongues failing for thirst, and their waters dried up [If they seek water, and there be none.]

2. All

2. All the wants and straits of the Saints, are before the Lord. [I the Lord will hear.] Christians, though those that should, will not, yet he that can, will hear the cries of your souls; all your faintings and pancies, and longings for the water of life, are before your eyes, and come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath.

3. God hath more wayes then one to relieve the wants, and refresh the bowels of his hungry ones. He hath extraordinary means for extraordinary cases. If they can find no common Rivers, he will open, or make new Rivers. The high places, the dry places, the very Rock will yeild a River, when God commands it.

4. Gods extraordinary provisions shall not be scanty and penurious, but rich & plentiful. Tis not *some drops*, or now and then a *draught*, a litle to stay the longing, or barley enough to keep them alive; he prepares them Rivers, Fountains, Pools, Springs of water (I will open Rivers in the high places, Fountains in the Vallies, &c.) Where-ever they be cast, in the high places, in the Vallies, in the Wilderness, in the dry Lands, wherever they be cast, I will cause provision enough to meet them; though they have neither bag nor bottle, nor any thing to carry with them, they shall not want; the river shall meet them, Springs shall arise & break forth to them.

5. They are not the wanting, but the thirsting, the seeking souls, whom God will supply. When the poor and needy [seek] water, and there is none. Oh *Christians*! How many poor are there that sit down by their poverty; who if they starve, yet will not beg; their emptiness hath taken away their appetites. These are sad souls; 'tis a sad sight to behold a company of hunger-bitten souls sit weeping and sighing, seeking after the bread and water of Life, and finding none; but to see empty, and yet not hungry; fainting, and yet not pancing souls; to see souls even dying away for want, and yet

yet not desiring or craving a supply, this is a much sorer spectacle. *A starving, thirstless soul, is next to a Ghost.*

Well, if ever such souls find, who never seek water, 'tis more than God hath promised. 'Tis they that seek water, to whom God will open a River.

6. Whatever difficulty there be to furnish the hungry Saints, with a sufficiency of provision, yet one way or other it shall be done. *I [the Lord] will bear. I [the God] of Israel will not forsake them. Upon me be all their wants. I am [God] and can, I am [their God] the God of Israel, and will provide for them.* They must and shall be provided for; whatever course I be put to take, I must not see them starve.

The Lord will not be wanting to them, if his Word be not heard, his Works shall speake; if Preachers cannot, Providence shall preach to them; if their friends cannot, their Enemies, their Stripes, their Wounds, their Rods shall instruct them. *Thy rod and thy staff comfort me.* If they have no other, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, the Fowls of the Air, the Beasts of the field shall be their Prophets and Apostles. If all should fail, yet the Spirit of the Lord shall not fail to be their Teacher and Comforter.

2. Extraordinary means have more in them than ordinary, and no means more than means.

1. Extraordinary means, when ordinary cannot be had, are sweeter and better feeding for the Saints than ordinary would be. The less of the Creature, the more of God; the less of common Providence, the more of special grace. Water out of the Rock was more precious than out of the River; the Manna of the Wilderness, was (to them that understood it) better than the milk of Canaan. *Elijah* never made better meals, than what he got out of the Ravens mouth. I have heard of a Woman in great distress of soul, who received comfort when

the *Word* was brought her by the mouth of a child, which she had failed of receiving from the mouth of many excellent Ministers.

2. No means often prove better than means; when I say, no means, I do not understand simply none; means they shall have, of one kind or other; their understandings, their memories, their secret duties, Prayer, Meditation, &c. but by no means, I understand nothing from without, no Ordinances, Friends, Societies, Books, &c. Gods feeding of a soul more immediately, is much sweeter, than when he sends provision by the hand of another; the *Samaritans* hearing of Christs words from his own mouth, was much more to them than the same words reported by the Woman. *Dulcius ex ipso fonte.* Water is the purer, the nearer the Fountain; the bread that comes down from Heaven, is better bread than that which grows up out of the Earth, though that be originally from Heaven also. By how much the more immediately your comforts come from Heaven, by so much the more they have of Heaven in them. If upon thy failing of publick Communion, it be made up so much the more in secret, sure the Saints have no reason to complain. And whether this be not so, let the Prisons into which the Saints have been sometimes cast, the Wilderness into which they have been sometimes banished; let *Elihu's* songs in the night, *Peters, Pauls, Silas* songs in the Prison, in the Stocks, stand forth and testifie. If Prison joyes, and Exile comforts, have not been often both fuller and sweeter to them, than when they have rolled in *Manna*, and lived in the fulness and freedom of all helps and means; then not a few Christians have either mistaken or misreported their experience. To pretend to live above Ordinances, whilst God affords them, is a wickedness that some men have to repent of; but where God denies them, he doth, he will provide a better subsistence without them.

Now

Now lay all this together, and then you will see, that even this also, this most greivous of Judgments, the famine of the Word, whenever it befalls, shall work for good to those that love God.

*Christians, cheer up your hearts; whatever droughe or dearth may fall upon the World, you are provided for, you shall have enough. If the shows fail without, you have within you that which shall spring up to eternal life. If your streams should be dried up, if your pastures should be trodden down, you have a God that will be both your Pastor and pasture. If the River fail you, the Rock shall supply you; what you want in ordinary, you may look to be made up in extraordinary means. The drying up of the waters, shall but drive you up to the Spring-head. If ever the Stars fail you, God shall but exchange *Star-light* for *Sun-light*; while there's light in the Sun, you shall not walk in darkness. See but to this, make sure that this God is yours, and he must find out a comfortable feeding for you; if you can but say *Dauids* first words after him, *The Lord is my shepheard*: you may then with confidence say the whole Psalm after him, *I shall not want, he will make me to lie down in green pastures, he will lead me by the still waters; though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, thy rod and thy staff shall comfort me, Thou shalt prepare me a Table in the presence of mine Enemies: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the dayes of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**

2. There is another Objection that seems to have one difficulty in it. Suppose a Saint to fall into *Distraction*, and thereby to be deprived utterly of the use of his Reason, and so live and die.

How can it be imagined, that this can work for his good, either in this world, or in the world to come? Can

any good arise out of an incapacity of any longer doing or receiving good, or patiently suffering evil? Can either his grace here, or his glory hereafter, be increased or advanced, by a mans being converted into a meer Brute?

1. There's no doubt at all, but this may make for the *Churches good*: Is there nothing that others may learn out of such a sad *providence*? If others may reap good by my evil, is it nothing to me? May it not be said to be good for any particular Saint, to bear the forest affliction by which the Church may have benefit? He hath not much of a Saint, to whom, if it were aforehand proposed, whether for the benefit of the Church, he would be content, if God see it good, to fall into such a calamity: He hath little of a Saint, that would deliberately refuse it. Doubtless a sincere Christian, who would count his usefulness to the good of the whole body, to be his good, would say even concerning such a *message*, were it brought to him, *Good is the word of the Lord*: And that which aforehand he would judge to be good for him to submit to, may it not be good for him to be under?

2. It may also be more directly for his particular *personal good*. For,

1. It may do him the same good which *Death* will do for him; concerning which the Apostle says, it is yours, *1 Cor. 3.* that is, it is for your advantage: it may take him from the evil to come; from those sorrows, and that trouble of heart which God might foresee falling upon him by any calamities, coming either on the Church in general, or himself, or family in particular: which being deprived of his reason, & power to reflect on, he cannot feel, or in the least be afflicted by. If you reply, *But the remedy is worse than the disease*: To be useless and unserviceable, is less eligible, than to be sorrowful and afflicted: Will any man choose to fall into a *Letbargy*, or *Apoplexie*, because 'twill secure him from the torment
of

of a *Feaver* ? If there be any weight in this *Reply*, I shall add a farther *Answer* ; which, if I misjudge not, will cut of all *Replies*.

2. Who knows *what sins and temptations* he might have fallen into, and fallen by, had not the Lord by this means prevented it, he might possibly have been a backslider, have fallen into gross sin, by which he might have been a terrour to himself, and a scandal to the Gospel; and is it not good for him that this is prevented? Is not that *affliction* a *mercy* which secures from such *iniquity*?

Who can say it is not thus? that the Lord foresaw he would have fallen into sin, and for prevention, brought him into this affliction : Who can say, it is not thus? if none can, than this is no Objection : if you reply, you say, *it may be* this is the case ; and I may as well say, *it may be not* : there might be no such thing, that God foresaw, as the reason of this *providence*. 'Tis but a *conjecture*, and an *uncertainty*, when you have made the most of it : Be it so, yet it will fully answer my end. I am now proving, *that all things work for good to the Saints*, that's sufficiently done already: But you are objecting against it ; and till you prove your Objection; which you can never do, unless you prove, that this is not the case; you must give me leave again to tell you, your Objection comes to nothing.

And so at length you see this blessed, glorious, comfortable Truth stands its ground, and triumphs over whatever hath any shadow of contradiction to it.

By the way, learn hence two things:

1. Rejoyce in this *promise of God* : Hath the Lord put in thy name here ? let thine heart say, *It is enough*. Be more joyful in this, that God hath thus undertaken the care of thee, than if God had wholly put thee to thine own hand, giving thee power to help, and liberty to choose for thy self. In what wilt thou rejoyce, if not

in this that the whole Creation are engaged to do thee a kindness, to help thee into the possession of thy God? Thou mayest now, not only submit to, but thankfully embrace every *Providence*, knowing upon what errand it comes to thee, for good, and not for hurt. Thou mayest now triumph, not only in the *consternations*, but in the *triumphs* of thine Enemies, whether they ride over thy back, or thou tread on their neck, 'tis all one, the issue will be the same. Thy troubles and thy consolations differ only in their countenance; with what ever grim face thy afflictions look, there are smiles under: learn to see through them, and thou mayest see light on the further side. Believe this word, thou mayest read it written upon every thing that befalls thee: ther's no Messenger that comes, but brings this promise in his hand, *Even this shall work for good*. Read it, and rejoyce.

2. *Lay thy self down quietly under it*. No more perplexing or distracting cares, what shall become of thee, no more unwarrantable shifting for thy self: let God alone. Shift not for thy self, lest God leave thee to thine own shifts. Let not the violence of evil men disturb thy peace, or provoke thee to *unpeaceableness*, whatever provocations thou maist have, avenge not thy self, neither give place unto wrath, murmurings or fears. In thy patience possess thy soul, thy God, and his good Word: Thy strength is to sit stil: Stand stil and see the salvation of God: thou hast nothing to do but to be *Holy*, let that be thine only care; thy God will see to it, thou shalt be *happy*, he is faithful that hath promised. Love God, and leave thy self and thy whole interest in this blessed Word, *All things shall work to thee for good*.

By this time you see something of the Riches of this promise; God is in the promise, the God of peace, the God of power, the God of patience, the God of hope; the heart of God, the help of God, the presence of God; and

by vertue whereof, all that ever befalls them shall work for their good. Methinks the hearing of this promise opened, should set your souls, and all that is within you a crying out, *Oh that this were my portion! Where-ever my lot do fall, as to outward things, though in a Prison, though in a Desert, though on a dunghil; let the lot of my soul lie in this Promise, The God of Peace shall be with you.* Why Brethren, will you take up with godliness: you have learned, and received, and heard the word of the Lord, the word of Faith, the word of Righteousness and Holiness; will you hearken to, will you obey these words? *These things do, and the God of peace shall be with you.*

Oh what foolish creatures are we, that ever we should be afraid of Religion, afraid of Holiness, afraid to own, obey, and follow God and his holy ways. What unreasonable fears are these, to those that beleive the Scriptures? If the Scriptures be true, this is the only way, this following God in holiness, to put your selves out of all danger, to put your selves into the heart, arms, presence, protection of the Almighty God of Heaven and Earth.

Oh that I could perswade you in thither, and there leave you; if you are once in the Lords arms, you are safe enough, into whatever hands you fall.

Use. By way of Application, let me once more speak a few words, 1. To the ungodly. 2. To the godly.

1. To the ungodly; my work with them shall be to perswade and direct them how to get into this peaceful and blessed state: Amongst the ungodly,

1. There are some who are far from the Kingdom of Heaven: as,

1. Those upon whom the Ministry of the Gospel hath done nothing at all: that miserable forlorn multitude of the grossly ignorant; who as they were born blind, have

had all their days such a mist of thick darkness abiding upon them, that they are incapable, without a miracle, of being savingly wrought upon. Speak unto them of Faith in Christ, of Repentance unto Life, of obeying the Gospel in the plainest way possible, & you will be as a *Barbarian* to them, as one of a strange Language, they know not what you say; if you should speak *Greek* or *Latin* to them they would understand it as well as the plainest Truths of the Gospel: A poor Minister of Christ may break his heart, and rend his bowels, in mourning over them; may draw forth his soul in the most melting expressions of his compassions to them, may break his brains in studying how to convey a little light into them, & yet cannot help them, cannot make them to understand so much, as that they understand nothing. Their minds are so wholly blinded by the god of this World, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, though it shine round about them, cannot find so much as a cranny into their hearts; and being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, they give up themselves to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness; walking in the lusts of their hearts, after the course of this World, in Riot, Luxury, Excess of Wine, Revellings, Banquetings, Covetousness, Lying, Blasphemies, and abominable Adulteries, & Idolatries; and yet remain without any conscience of sin, or fear of their danger; being as natural brut Beasts, as if they were made for slaughter and destruction.

Are there none such in this place? Doth not the Earth every where groan, our Land mourn, our Congregations travel in pain? Is not this Congregation blacked & burthened with such miserable creatures, who after all the Instructions, Counsels, Wooings, Warnings, Threatnings and Judgments of God which have been in their ears, and before their eyes, remain to this day a stupid, blockish,

blockish, brutish generation, without the least sense of their sin, or wish to be delivered from it?

Oh you blind and dark souls, consider and understand, if it be possible, these two Scriptures, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *If our Gospel be hid it is hid to those that are lost. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of those that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine unto them.* This darkness is from Hell; the prince of darkness hath held you under your blindness; and this darkness leads to Hell, to the blackness of darkness for ever: You are lost, you are lost souls, lost for ever, if the Gospel leave you in this state of blindness in which you have so securely continued to this day, Isa. 27. 11. *It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them; he that formed them, will shew them no favour.*

2. Those upon whom the Gospel hath seemed to have done its work; but it is its *strange work*.

There are two works which the Gospel doth: some it enlightens, others it smites with blindness; some it softens, others it seals up under hardness; some it gains over to Christ, others it gives up to the unbelief & impenitence of their hearts, Isa. 6. 10. *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, &c.* Go and preach to this people, but preach them into hardness and blindness: because they refused to see or hear, let the light put out their eyes; let the joyful sound strike them deaf, and stop their ears; never leave hammering them, till thou hast hammered them into *Rocks* or *Anvils*. Some there are that have so trifled with Conversions, baffled Conscience, and suffered their lusts so to resist and bear down their light; that have had so many heats and colds, so many thawings and freezings; that have taken up so many purposes, and made so many promises,

and

and yet all comes to nothing ; that the Gospel hath received a charge from the Lord, to make an end of its work: Go, says God, and make an end with these men; I'll be mocked by them no more: I'll be trifled and dallied with by them no longer: wound them no more, fright them no more, persuade them no longer: make their hearts fat, their ears heavy, and shut their eyes and give them up to their hearts lust, that they may walk in their own counsels, and fill up the measure of their iniquities.

You, that after all the warnings you have received from the Lord, and after some workings of them sometimes upon your Consciences, are yet going after your lusts, prostituting your selves to your belluine & sensual pleasures, filling up daily the measure of your iniquities Oh tremble, & consider sadly, whether this be not likely to be your case; that the Gospel hath even done with you, and given you over unto an impenitent heart, and reprobate mind; in hope, that how near soever you are to this dreadful state, you may be yet one step at least short of it; I shall this once more adventure a few words upon you, together with them that I have already mentioned: And first let me reason a little with you.

I. Art thou one of them that obey the Gospel, or not? Art thou one of them that love God, one of the Called according to his promise, or not? Art not thou an Alien, an adversary against God, and a Rebel against his Word? Let thy Conscience speak, let thy Ways speak, let thine Oaths, and thy Drunkenness, & thine Adulteries, thy scoffing at God and his holy ways; thy hating his Instructions, and kicking at his Reproofs; thy hardnings against his Calls; thy treacherous dealings in his Covenant, and the Vows of God that are upon thee; let these speak what thou art: Is this that which God hath chosen and called thee to? Are these the things thou

thou hast learned, and received, and heard of him? Did he ever say, *These things do, and the God of peace shall be with you?* Thou needest no other Conviction, than that of *Israel*, Je. 2. 23. *How canst thou say, I am not polluted? See thy way in the Valley, and know what thou hast done.* How canst thou say that thou art not a wretch? With what face canst thou deny, but thou art an enemy of God, and of all righteousness? See thy way in the Valley, trace the footsteps of thy life, behold thy practices and thy course: Sure thou art very blind, if thou behold thy self in this glass, and dost not see thy face as the face of a Devil.

There are some, whom it may be harder work to convince, who have the face of a Christian, the tongue of a Saint, but within, the heart of a Beast. Hypocrites are as hard to be convinced, as Hypocrisie is hard to be detected.

But thou who carriest thy wicked heart in thy forehead, upon thy tongue, upon the palms of thy hands, & in the very prints of thy feet, whose malice against God and his Holiness, may be read in every look, in every word, in every line of thy life; needest thou any further proof that thou art not of God? Thou mayest as well put me to prove that *Hell* is not *Heaven*, that the *Devil* is no *Saint*, as that thou art no Christian. Dost [thou] love God, art thou under the hope of the promise? Ask thy ways man, and let these tell thee.

2. Dost thou mean to keep at this distance from God to the death? Dost thou in earnest? Is there nothing in those rich promises that have been laid before thee, which thou canst wish 'twere thine? Is there no such Word in thine heart, *Oh that my lot were here!* Art thou content thy name should be left out for ever? Is there so little in the peace of God, that thou canst sell it for the pleasures of sin? Art thou content that nothing should

should prosper with thee, but that every thing should be a gin and a snare, and a curse to thee? Art thou content that the Pit should be thy place, eternal wrath thy portion, and that every creature, every comfort, every cross that comes should give thee a pluck down from *Heaven* and a kick towards *Hell*? Canst thou think they mean thee any thing else, when all does but harden thee in thy sin & make thee kick against thy God? Art thou so unwilling to leave thy sins for the hope of the promise of God, that thou art content to give up thy hopes for the love of thy sins? Darest thou say, *Let me have my part in the pleasures and contentments of this life, and I am content to relinquish my part in Christ? Let God let me alone in my sins, and let him damn my soul: Let me live at my ease, and my liberty, and let my name be blotted out of the Book of Life: I am content to take my place, and my lot among the damned in another world, so I have my pleasure with them in this world.* And dost thou say less, or other than this, whilest thou refusest, or resolvest against following thy God? He that refuses to accept of the Redemption of Christ upon the holy terms upon which 'tis offered, says, in effect, I am lost, I am sold for a Captive to the Devil; my first father sold me for an apple, Christ would now buy me back again to my self; but for my part, I am content that the first bargain stand: as to my interest, I confirm the bargain; as for my soul being sold to the Devil, to the Devil let it go. This is the voice of every wilful refuser of the terms of the Gospel. Oh wretch! does not thy heart tremble? does not thy hair stand on end? do not thy knees shake? and are not the joints of thy Loins loosed, to consider what thou hast done, and art still a doing?

Sinners, I have but a little more to speak to you, but shall that little be nothing? Hitherto you have stood it out, and will not be perswaded by ought that God hath spoken

spoken by me : But oh ! Must I leave you thus ? Why may not a word at parting do more than all that hath been spoken ? Oh that it might ! Shall neither my first nor last words prevail with you ? What if ~~my~~ last, should be ~~your~~ last ? If the last that I must preach, be the last that you must hear ? There is a day set, that will be your last day : There is a Sabbath, that will be your last Sabbath : There is a Sermon, that will be your last Sermon : There is a Warning, that will be your last Warning : Oh what if this should be it ! If the Lord should take your *this days denial* for your *final answer*, and never ask your consent again for ever ? But whether it be your last or no, I must be henceforth silent to you : And oh ! will you send me away with so sad an heart, with the sorrow & shame of the disappointed ? Will you break my heart, by persisting to harden yours ? Is this all that I shall have to return to the Lord that sent me unto you ? I have declared thy name unto them, but they did not regard it : I have invited them to come to thee, but they would not follow me : I have warned them to return from their sins, but they would not hearken : Are you willing that I shall give in this answer, & bear this witness against you at the great day ? Sinners hearken, Is there not one blind person among you that is yet willing to have his eyes open'd ? is there not one captive to lust and vanity, that's willing to be set free from his bondage ? is there not one more that will be perswaded to be wise, and to prefer an immortal soul, God, Glory, Eternity, before his brutish perishing pleasures ? is there not one drunkard more, that will yet be perswaded to be sober ? not one vain person, that will be perswaded to be serious ? am I making my last draught among you, and shall I take nothing ? not one soul more ? if you will not be prevailed with, then hear the Word of the Lord, *Ezek. 3. 19. If thou warn the wicked, and he*
turn

turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity but thou hast delivered thy soul.

But if there be any few relenting hearts among you, who are brought but thus far, to cry out, *Why what must I do?* I would leave with such these few words of counsel, and oh that my counsel might be accepted by them.

1. *Get a deep sense of thy dreadful state; What art thou sinner? What is thy state? at ease, in peace, out of fear, in pleasure? What, and yet a sinner? in the bond of iniquity? Captive to the Devil? without Christ? without the Promise? under the Curse? Study these Scriptures, Job. 8. 34. He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin. Ver. 44. Ye are of your Father the Devil. 2 Tim. 2. 26. Held captive by him at his will, Acts 8. 23. In the gall of bitterness, and the bond of Iniquity, 1 Joh. 5. 19. The world lieth in wickedness. Psal. 11. 6. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, And an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their Cup. Psal. 49. 15. Like sheep they are laid in the grave, death shall feed upon them.*

Rise Sampson, the Philistines are upon thee; awake sleeper, the Devil is upon thee; Death is at thy back, the gin is at thy heel, the curse is over thy head, the very next step may be Hell; thou liest in wickedness to day, and maist be in fire and brimstone before to morrow: Sure thou art in a dead sleep, that canst take thine ease, in such a lodging. Is this the state thou art so loth to change? Is this the state thou so boastest of, and blestest thy self in? when thine heart is merry with thy wine, swelled with thy pride, jolly amongst thy Companions; put in such a serious question, But what am I all this while? Let this thought sawce thy sweet morsel, spice thy pleasant Cups, and be the burthen of thy merry songs: after this, Hell, Snares, Fire and Brimstone, the vengeance of

eternal fire. Oh an Heaven ! a Paradise ! oh my dear pleasures ! oh my sweet Daughter ! oh my merry days ! what mortal can part with you ? I, but what comes after ? What is there at the bottom ? Look a little before thee, and if that sight turn not thy stomach, sure thou art sufficiently hardy.

Study thy case, and tremble ; and when thou tremblest, there's hope thou wilt turn. Think not of Repentance, or escaping from thy sinful state, till thou see and fear it. We read, *Isa. 42. 7.* that Christ was sent to open the blind eyes, & to bring out the prisoners out of prison, If the prisoners eyes be shut, 'tis to little purpose that the prison doors be open : Their eyes must be first opened, not only that they may see their way [out] but that they may see themselves [in] Prison. Open thine eyes, sinner, if ever thou wilt escape ; open thine eyes, and see where thou art ; Thy fools Paradise wherein thou blessed thy self, is thy souls prison, where thou art like to be held under eternal bondage.

2. Give a present Bill of Divorce to every sin ; hug not death one minute longer in thy bosom : If thou lovest thy life, say not of any one sin, *Nothing but Death shall part thee and me*. No, not so much as this, *Yet a little while, and I will let thee go.* To day, to day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

3. Dread it as Hell, that thy hope in Christ should lessen thy fear of sin. Let not the hope of a Saviour be thy damnation. Make not Christ the *Pandor of sin* ; continue not in sin, because grace hath abounded.

4. Break off from thy Companions in sin ; wilt thou love them to the death ? Christ and thy soul can never be married, till thy soul and sinners be parted. Escape for thy life, get thee up from the Tents of these men, linger not. Thou art held under the power of the Devil, by cords, and by knots, by the cords of thy sins, and

and by the knots of thy *Companions*. There's no hope that the cords of sin will be broken, till the knots of evil *Companions* be loosed. Sinner, these *binding cords* will, if you look not to it, become *whip cords* to torment thee. Oh take heed thou never come to be lashed with such knotted cords!

Thy *Companions* in sin, as they now heighten thy pleasures, so will they hereafter sharpen thy plagues. Sinners comfort their hearts with this thought, That if they be damned, they shall have store of company: but let them know, that the fire of Hell will burn just so much the cooler for the multitudes that are there, as the fire of their Chimney does for the store of fuel. When thou art charmed with the roaring of thy *Companions* in the Ale-house, think what Musick their roaring with thee will make, when you shall all meet in your eternal Prison. Away from evil Company; you will remember hereafter, when 'tis too late, how much, and with how little success I have laboured with you in this thing.

5. Baffle not conscience once more. Awakened sinner, charm not thy conscience into silence, nor dash it out of countenance. Thy Conscience is the only friend that God or the soul hath left within thee. Thy will, and thy affections, and thine appetite are all gone; the Devil hath stolen them away, and hired them all against thee, thou hast nothing but poor Conscience left.

Thy Conscience hath been often upon thee, pleading with thee for God, and for pity to thy soul; it hath warned thee, reproved thee, & often whisper'd thee in thine ear? What dost thou mean? Whither art thou going? When wilt thou return? Away with thy sins, have done with thy *Companions*, no more of this Drunkenness, this Riot, this Covetousness; thou art a lost man, thy soul is lost if thou go on. Thus Conscience hath warned thee,
and

and thou hast sometimes hearkened to it, and spoken it fair. The throbs and the pangs, and the wounds thou hast felt and received from it, have rung from thee, now and then, a promise: Well, through the grace of God, I'll hearken to Conscience, I'll be a new man; away from me ye sinners, I will keep the Commandements of my God. And yet shortly after, when thy temptations return, thy Companions come, all is forgotten; and along thou goest, as a fool to the Stocks, or an Ox to the slaughter; and this hath been thy way and thy manner, from time to time. Now and then Conscience draws a sigh, or a tear from thee; and by and by receives a kick or a stab:

Beware sinner, Conscience will not always be thus used. If ever it speak again, say it not nay; its next word may be its last; if ever thou weariest it into perpetual silence, then farewell all for ever; Conscience is the only Friend thou hast left.

Convinced soul! How wilt thou bear the revenges of an awakened abused Conscience? all thy bafflings of it here, will be repeated over in eternity: How will all this look when it shall meet thee before thy Judge? Save thy self from that hour, baffle not Conscience once more

6. Let not the greatness of thy sins, nor the difficulty of Christs terms, hinder or discourage thee from making a present close with Christ. Say not, his Yoke is too heavy, his Cross is too grievous for me to bear, or my sins are too great for him to bear. Set the Throne against the Yoke, the Crown against the Cross, infinite Merit and Mercy, against mighty sins; and go unto Jesus, cast thy self on his blood, and bowels, and put thy self under his Yoke and scepter. If he will give life to thee, be content that he gives Laws to thee: and as ever thou expectest to live by him,

be resolved to live to him, and no longer to thy self. Go to Jesus, and when thou goest, take with thee these two Scriptures, *Mat. 11.28. Come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest; Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and you shall find rest unto your souls, Joh. 6.37. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.*

7. Fall close to Duties, and keep close to Ordinances

1. Let secret and Family Prayer be thy *daily exercise*. Count not thy self a Christian, till thou give thy self to prayer.

2. Let not reading the Word, Chatechising, &c. be strangers in thy house.

3. Prize, improve, and sanctifie the Sabbaths: The Lord on those days comes down upon his Mount, to meet thy soul, to commune with thee, to bless thee, to feed thee, and fill thee with whatsoever thy soul desireth or wanteth. Get thee up to meet thy God: But remember when thou goest, leave thy stuff behind thee.

4. View often, and take an account of thy self, of the in-come and success of all thy duties: What is all my praying, reading, hearing, &c. come to? What is brought forth? Is the work done for which all these are? Are my sins and my soul parted? Are my Companions in sin abandoned? is Christ and my soul united? Beware you never make Praying and Hearing to serve you [instead] of Believing and Repenting. But to help you on to it.

Remember these seven words when I am gone:

1. Get a sense of thy dreadful state,
2. Abandon presently every sin.
3. Let not thy hope in Christ lessen thy fear of sin.
4. Shake off ev'ry sinful Companion.

5. Baffle

5. Baffle not Conscience once more.

6. Make a present close with Christ.

7 Fall close to duties, and keep close to Ordinances.

These things do, and the God of peace shall be with you : But remember, *There is no peace saith my God to the wicked.*

2. There are others that are *near the Kingdom of God.* *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God.* There are some that are like *Ephraim, Hos. 7. 8.* Cakes half baked; like *Agrippa, almost Christians, Act. 26. 29.* *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian; ἐν ὀλίγῳ.* Thou hast brought me within a little of Christianity.

They are come to the threshold of saving Faith; within a step of sincere Godliness. They have been professing, and praying, and hoping, and wishing themselves in, and yet are short of it; they have been enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, have tasted of the heavenly gift, have felt something of the sweetness of Christ, have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of many excellent and useful gifts, have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the World to come. They have set out after Christ, have left the blind and prophane World much behind them, have escaped much of the pollutions of this World, left many sins, taken up with many duties, have a name among the Saints, have suffered many things for the name of Christ, and notwithstanding all this, here they stick, they cannot give themselves up fully to Christ; something or other, either the World, or their Companions, or their pleasures, or their ease or their sloth, hath such hold on them, that they cannot *unreservedly, resolvedly*, give themselves up to the Dominion of Jesus Christ, nay, it may be, they cannot tell why, yet they cannot do it. Though they can say, I would be, yet they cannot say, I will be

the Lords. These are near the Kingdom of God, but yet short of it. He that cannot say, *I will be*, can less say, *I am the Lords*.

But here I must distinguish of two sorts of *almost Christians*.

1. There are some that have reached to *almost*, and are still reaching forwards : the state of such is hopeful, though it be not safe. Oh that we could see more such *almost Christians*.

2. There are others that have reached to, and rest in *almost* ; who mistaking *almost* for *altogether*, do there take up their stand. These are far from the Kingdom of God.

Brethren, I much fear, that among the number of Professors, there are more of these *almost Christians*, than we are aware of : On it would make our hearts shake to consider how far many go, to what degree of resignation, resolution, affection, action, submission to sufferings, they attain, and yet fall off at last, and thereby shew they were still short of Christ; *They went out from us, because they were not of us*.

I Particularly pity many of the more sober Gentry, who have a good will to Religion, and a fair respect for the Professors of it ; countenancing holiness, doing many worthy things for the Name and servants of God ; refraining from the viciousness, and vanity of many of their Rank and Quality ; who yet dwelling in temptations, being enangled in carnal correspondencies, entertained with an affluence of carnal delights and pleasures, and finding hereby a strict self-denying and mortified life, to be of greater difficulty to them, than to men of lower rank, are apt to think it not of such necessity who may possibly upon a narrow enquiry discern, after all their good hopes of themselves, and the great opinions of others concerning them,

them, that they are yet short of that simplicity, and godly sincerity, which alone will prove them Christians indeed.

Blessed be God there are amongst us such, those who have broken through all temptations, have adventured upon the disobliging all the World; have laid down their honours, pleasures, friends, and all their carnal interests whatsoever, at the feet of Christ; and preferring a close communion with God, the peace of a good Conscience, the joys of Religion; yea, the very reproaches of Christ above all their worldly honours, and fleshly pleasures, have given themselves up to the power of the Gospel, and an exemplary Spiritual and Heavenly life. But it is to be feared, lest there be also such, who have deservedly gained great respect among the Saints, and gone far along with them, who yet are come but to the threshold of Christianity; and being afraid to put in, there they are in danger to perish everlastingly, *Quod fore fit non fit*, he that is but almost saved, is damned for altogether.

O Friends, what do you mean? will you lose all the ground you have gotten; all the things you have wrought? shall all your sufferings for the name of Christ be lost, and in vain? after you have tasted the bitterness of the cross, will you not go one step farther, and take the joys of the cross? Is the work of Regeneration brought to the Birth, and shall it be left in misery, and prove an abortion? would one step more land your souls in the Kingdom of God? are you gotten so near a shore, and will you perish in the Harbour? are you gotten off from the Tents of the Edomites, and gotten even to the Borders of Canaan, and will you not enter? are you gotten to Pisgah, and have a view of the Land of promise, and see that it is a good Land? are you come so near as to see, that true holiness is such a

beautiful state, such a blessed state, and do you wish your selves in, and will you yet die on the other side *Jordan*? you have prayed; put on a little more, prayer may do it: you have laboured and reasoned with, and perswaded your hearts, give no over, a little more labour may prevail. Oh that I knew what to say more, that might bring you on! Oh that the Lord would yet put one word or other in my mouth, that might overcome you! that I might shoot one Arrow more, that might strike home, use one Argument more, that might be cogent, and gain your full consent to Christ, that I might see you safely landed ere I be parted from you. Oh think, think what a dreadful disappointment this will be for you, that are come so near to godliness, as that you verily think you have attained it; if after all the joyes, pleasures and hopes, the little Religion you have had, hath fed you withal, you should at last have a **TEKEL** written for your doom, and hear that cutting word pronounced upon you, *Thou art weighed in the ballance, and art found wanting.* With you also would I leave a few words.

1. Lose not both Worlds; this World thou hast lost already, by leaving them so much behinde thee; lose not that which is before, for want of coming on a little farther: think not of hanging always betwixt Heaven and Hell; in the other World there is no middle, either go back, or come on, turn thee to the right hand or to the left.

2. Mistake not *almost* for *altogether*, such a mistake may be mortal. Do not too easily conclude, thou hast already attained; if thou takest something of Christianity to be all, thy *all* is nothing. 'Tis a wonderful thing, to see how easily men satisfie themselves in a matter of such weight and intricacie. Thine heart is deceitful, trie it thoroughly before thou trust it.

One grain too light, and thou art undone. God, Glory, Soul, Eternity, all lie at stake; one tittle short of sincerity, and all lost. Be jealous of thy self, never give over suspecting thy state, till thou hast put it past suspicion: Conclude not, till thou hast thoroughly disputed the case; give not over the dispute, till the matter be no longer disputable. Canst thou be so sure? the least mistake is as wide as Heaven and Hell; the bottomless Gulf reaches home to the Threshold of Glory; thy *tantum non*, will be as much as the Devil looks for, only not in, though never so near, will be thy eternal perdition.

3. Beware that this thought, *one time or other I shall have more power*, slacken not thy present care and labour, let not thy hopes undo thee; lose not a present opportunity, in hopes of future ability; labour each day to bring the matter to a *present* issue; and that with no less earnestness, than if this day were to give a final determination; and thou wert sure, that thou wert just come to thy *now or never*.

4. Let not a small matter part Christ and thee, Heaven may not cost thee half so much more as it hath cost thee already. Art thou come within one penny of thy Lords price, and shall that break the bargain?

5. Let not thy Oyl thou hast gotten, serve only for fuel for thy fire, Let not thy common grace thou hast obtained here, be of no other use, but to add to thy confusion hereafter: every beam of light that hath shined to thee here, will add to thee horreur of thine everlasting darkness. Every drop of Honey thou hast tasted in Religion, will be thy Gall and Wormwood in the day of thy condemnation. Be not more miserable hereafter, for that thou hast been less wicked here; the remembrance how far thou wert once for Glory,

will be one of the sharpest Teeth of thine everlasting Worm.

6. Lastly, Be all or nothing ; come up hither, or get thee down to thy lot ; particularly,

1. *Be all unto Christ.*

2. *Let Christ be all to thee.*

3. *Let all Christ be accepted, and improved by thee.*

1. Be all unto Christ, have none to please but Christ, and for Christ; have nothing to seek but Christ, and for Christ; resolve against *Reserves* and *limits*; give up all, and keep back nothing; say not, thus much I can spare, and no more; hitherto I will go, and no farther. Divide not thy self, thy love, thy care, thy aims, betwixt Christ, and any thing else. Let thy whole soul run in one Chancel. Rest not short of a full resignation, and when thou hast resigned, repent not.

2. Let Christ be all to thee; say not, I must have an Estate too, my friends too, my pleasures and my ease too; let Christ be enough, and all to thee; Father, Mother, House, Lands, Portion; say concerning all thou hast else, *Be thou mine Lord, and let these go their way.*

3. Let all of Christ be accepted and improved by thee. Divide not thy self, and divide not Christ; leave not any thing of thy self, for any but Christ; refuse not any thing of Christ, for thy self. Think not *thy* all too much for thee to give, nor *Christ's* all, too much for thee to embrace. Thy half will not satisfy Christ, nor will half of Christ suffice thee. Thou must give and have, and therefore resolve to give and take, all or none. Let all Christ be accepted and improved by thee.

1. The merit of his blood.

2. The light and authority of his Law.

3. The power of his Spirit.

1. Accept the merit of his blood ; renounce thine own, and rely on his righteousness ; as God hath, so do thou, lay on him all thy iniquities. Think not of Sanctification, without satisfaction. Think not to satisfy in the least, by ought that thou canst do, let that lye upon him. Judge thy self, but seek to be justified alone through faith in his blood. Say unto the Lord, What I owe to thee, put it upon his account ; my Christ must answer for me.

2. Accept, and submit to the light and authority of his Law. Think not he is thy Priest, unless he be thy Prophet and thy King : If he must answer for thee ; let him instruct thee, and be thou willing to learn of him ; since he hath bought thee, let him govern thee ; say not of any thing he requires, *this is too much to do*, since he said not to thee, *'tis too much to die*. Count not thy self a Christian, whilst thou art unwilling to receive the utmost light, or to submit to the utmost of thy duty ; say not of any one thing, of all that Christ requires, *This I must have abated*, and then I will be his.

3. Accept and exert the power of his Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of Power. The same Argument which the Apostle uses to prove himself a Minister of Christ, is necessary to prove thee a Christian, 2 Cor. 13. 3, 4. *Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. Though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God ; for we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God.* (Ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me,) ye put me to prove that I am a Minister of Christ ; why, here's the proof of it, (My preaching hath not been weak, but mighty in you,) it hath been followed and attested by the power of Christ, which hath wrought mightily in

in you ;) It hath been followed and attested by the power of Christ, which hath wrought mightily in you; as weak as we are, yet the power of Christ hath been manifest and magnified in us. Dost thou seek a proof of thy Christianity? why, here must be the proof, that though thou art weak of thy self, yet thou livest in the power of God, which is mighty in thee. Though thou canst do nothing of thy self, yet thou art able to do all things through Christ which strengthens thee.

Thou sayest, thou art *willing*, but thou art *weak*; thou desirest to be, and to do, what God would have thee, but thou canst not perform.

This may comfort and support thee much, under thy failings and miscarriages in some particular duties; but if this be thy case *in ordinary*, in the main of thy life, that *to will is all thou hast*, thou art not a Christian. *He that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his.* And he that hath the Spirit of Christ, it is in him as the living power of God, actually carrying him on in an holy life, *Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

I will not only command, persuade, incline you, but *cause* you. It shall be done, my Spirit shall bring you on, and help you through. Ye shall keep my statutes, and do them. Where ever the Spirit of God hath breathed in the *life of grace*, there are more than breathings out after a *gracious life*. Sincere grace hath more in it than *wishings* and *wouldings*, than *attempts* and *overtures*; Life is a power to act, *Phil. 2. 12, 13. Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you, to will and to do.* Where ever God worketh the *To velle*, he works also the *To operari*. Where ever God works [*in*] he gives us a power to work [*out*]

[out] the works of Christianity. Oh rest not till thou find thy self endued with this power from on high, and enabled to go through with thy work; they are not thy *attempts*, but thy *achievements*: they are not thy *Offers* at an *Holy life*, but thy *acting it*, that must prove thee a Christian; *He that doth righteousness, is righteous.*

Be it thus with thee; be all to Christ, let Christ be all to thee; let all Christ be accepted and improved by thee; heartily accept the merit of Christ's righteousness, submit to the light and authority of his Law, get thy self possessed with, and live in the power of his Spirit; Be it thus with thee, come up hither, and then thou art safe: Thy *almost* is now come to *altogether*, and if I must now leave thee, thou wilt be the better able to spare me: *These things do, and the God of Peace shall be with thee.* Thou art gotten into Sanctuary, and now whatever Tossings and Tumblings, whatsoever displeasing or afflicting changes may be thy lot in this World, thou maist sing that *Requiem* to thy self, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee: Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thee.*

Though thou walkest through the shadow of death, thou mayest now sit thee down under the shadow of thy Lord with great delight, and with great security, whose fruit shall be ever sweet to thy taste: Though thou dwellest in *Mesech*, and hast thy habitation among the Tents of *Kedar*, yet thou maist lay thee down in peace, and take thy rest, for the Lord doth, the Lord will make thee to dwell in safety.

2. To the God'y.

Happy souls! *The God of peace is with you, all things shall work for good to you; only that he may continue with*

with you, continue you with him, in the obedience of that Gospel to which you have delivered up your selves.

My Exhortation to you shall be:

1. General, Respecting the whole course of your Lives.

2. Particular; Respecting your daily Walk.

My general Exhortation shall be bottomed on that of the Apostle, Phil. 1. 27, 28. *Let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one Spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel. In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God*

[*Let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel.*] Walk worthy of the Gospel, let your lives be suitable and answerable to the holy Gospel, which you profess.

1. Let your lives answer the ends of the Gospel, the exaltation of the Name and glorious grace of God in Christ, live an humble, self-denying, self-abasing life; this is a Christ exalting life.

2. Let your lives answer the dignities and honours the Gospel invests you with. You are the children of God, the heirs of Glory, the spouse of Christ, the Bride, the Lambs Wife: You are a Royal Priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; know your privileges, and do not live below your selves; defile not your glory, by stooping to a carnal and earthly life; a Jewel is no more unbecoming a Swines snout, than fleshly Husks, a Saints Palace: 'Tis below you, who are a peculiar people to your God to live in common with the men of this world; humble your selves into the least of Saints, but do not humble your selves into Brutes. Live in the Spirit, converse with God, be dealing

ing for Glory, honour, and Immortality.

3. Let your Lives answer the *Names* which the Gospel puts upon you, *Doves, Lambs, Lillies*; be harmless, peaceable, gentle, beautiful, fragrant, sending forth a precious savour in the world.

4. Let your Lives answer *the riches*, the reward, the Crown, the Kingdom which the Gospel sets before you.

Live a *contented life*, be satisfied, be well pleased with what you have here, be it little or much; disgrace not your portion the Gospel allots you, as if it were a poor insufficient Portion: Let your souls say, *How small a handful soever you have of this Earth, it is enough, Christ is mine*: A discontented Christian says, *Christ is not enough, Heaven is not enough*. Let the Contentation of thy Spirit, declare before the World that *the lines are fallen to thee in a pleasant place, and that thou hast a goodly heritage*: Do not put this scorn upon God and Glory, that thou must be beholding to the Devil, to mend thy portion.

Christian, either thou art within the promise, or a stranger from it: either thou hast the God of peace with thee, or not; if not, methinks thou should find other matter to take up thy thoughts, and not have leisure to perplex thy self with every trivial want; that thy meat, or thy drink, or thine house, or the carriage of thy Friends towards thee, are not according to thy mind; thy soul, thy soul man, thy life is in danger. Oh what an Eternity art thou like to have of it? Canst thou want a God, a Christ, an Heaven, and thine heart never stir at it? and is it the dissatisfaction of thy vain mind or appetite, such a Burthen? Is the Devil in thy heart, and it never moves thee? And shall an ill Neighbour be a vexation to thee? Canst thou feel a Feather, when thou hast a Talent upon thee? the curse, the curse of God is upon thee: I cannot

cannot wonder *thou* shouldst be discontent; but methinks these small matters, by a man in thy case, should not be minded.

If Christ and the Promise be thine, is not that enough? are not all things enough? God is all things: He that hath the Son, hath not only with him, but in him all things. Are all things nothing with thee? what wouldst thou have more then all? The Heathens acknowledged, *that vertue is sufficient*. It was a *Maxime* among the ancient Philosophers *ἀυτάρκης ἡ ὁρεσις*, *Vertue is self-sufficient*; a vertuous man hath no need to be beholding either to Friends or Fortune, he hath enough in himself. The Apostle tells us, that *Godliness μετ' αὐταρκειας*, with its *self-sufficiency*, is great gain, 1 Tim. 6. 6. Solomon tells us, Prov. 14. 14. *A good man is satisfied from himself*. He hath that within him, out of which his satisfaction grows. A Christian hath the whole Gospel within him: he hath Christ, the Promise, the Everlasting God, Heaven, glory, within him: as rich as he is, he may truly say, *Omnia mea mecum porto*. He carries his *all* in his heart, and can thence get out a living, a sufficiency for all Times, Cases, and Wants: cast him out naked out of his Habitation, out of his Conatry, yet he carries all with him, he leaves not an Hoof behind him.

Christians, Leave it to the poor of the Earth, to carnal men, (the richest of them is poor enough) leave it to them to be discontent. A carnal man hath so many to be beholding to, to patch up his contentment, that 'tis no wonder he falls short of it; the Sun, the Clouds his Fields, his Folds, his Freinds, his Enemies, his Honours, his Pleasures, his Meat, his Drink, his House, his Money, yea, the Devil and all, and his Lusts, every Creature must come in with their part, to contribute to his contentment; if but one thing fails him, there's some-

Something wanting to make it up; nay, if none fail, but they all do their best to please him, yet all will not do, *in the fulness of his sufficiency he is in straits*. When he hath all he can have, his still hungry heart cries out of what it hath, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*. Leave it to these, Christians, who have nothing but emptiness to fill their souls withal, leave it to them to be discontented. Will you lay the same imputation upon the God of Glory? The discontent of a Christian, is a kind of Blasphemy; it proclaims concerning God also, and all the Glory of the Gospel, *This also is Vanity, Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*.

Christians, Study your Riches more, count over your Treasures; dwell more in your God, and his Gospel; Read over your Priviledges, Promises, and Hopes; feed more on that Bread of life, drink more freely of those living Springs, which are broken forth to you. Prove more what godliness hath in it, get out the sweetness and the pleasure of it, (none in the world live such a voluptuous life, as he that lives most with God) get out the pleasure of godliness, lie more at the Breasts, suck harder, press the Clusters and the Wine and Milk will come; make the most of Religion, and you will have enough; never blame it for empty, or unsatisfactory, while there is more to be had.

Go not into other Pastures run not from Flower to Flower, keep you home: Let not your God find you in another Feild: If you keep with God, the less you have of Creature-vanities, the more full will your contentment be. Christian, Honour thy God and his Gospel, let his Breasts satisfy thee, and err thou always in his love. Let the World read the Gospel-sufficiency in thy souls pleasure, and satisfaction with it alone.

5. Let your conversations answer the supports of the Gospel and its succours. Live a patient life, *J. m. 7. 5.*

Be patient, Brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Patience is a grace suited to our present Gospel state; I will call it, a *Friend that is born for the day of adversity*. If you are Christians, you have need of *Patience*; and if you have *Patience*, you need no more, *James 1. 4.* Let patience have her perfect work, that you may be entire *Lacking nothing*.

Patience, is a submitting, sedate, and calm frame of spirit; whereby a Christian, from Gospel grounds, is born up under all his Troubles, and born through all his Duties.

Between *Patience* and *Contentedness*, there is this difference; *Contentedness* is the quiet of the heart, and its satisfaction with its *smallest portion of good things*. *Patience* is the quiet of the heart under the *greatest pressure of evil things*.

A patient spirit is a submitting spirit; It's heartily content that God should have his Will. With whatsoever God is pleased, it will not be displeased. *It's the Lord, let him do whatsoever seems good in his Eyes*. What seems good in Gods eyes, shall not seem evil in mine.

It is a *Calm and quiet spirit*: It will not strive nor cry, nor lift up its voice in the streets; it can *mourn*, but it does not *murmur*; it can *feel*, but it will not *fret* at the hand of God. A patient person is ever *compos mentis*, hath the command and government of his spirit, keeps it sober, and in due order, doth not rave and rage. Impatience is a kind of frenzy; such persons are *besides themselves*. In our patience we possess, and by our impatience we lose our souls: we lose the rule and government of them, the peace and the use of them. An impatient man is besides himself, both as a man and as a Christian.

1. He is besides himself *as a man*, Impatience turns Reason out of doors; and for the affections, they are all

are all in an uproar, and will know no command or government.

2. He is besides himself, *as a Christian* turned quite out of course: Duties, Comforts, Experiences, Hopes, all are laid aside. Keep you quiet, keep the peace in your heart, and you keep your heart.

In this calmness & quietness, *it bears up under troubles*. Patience hath fortitude in it, it neither frets nor faints under all its burthens. Christians *must* bear, and patient Christians *can* bear any thing that comes on them. The proper exercise of patience, is *enduring*; he endures not that suffers only, but that can bear what he suffers.

It bears through its Duties: The passion of a patient person doth not hinder his action; he holds his course, keeps on his way, whatever load he hath on his back. He (runs) with patience the race which is set before him; he is not discouraged, nor diverted from his holy course by any suffering it costs him.

And indeed, Christian patience stands not in a bare forced quiet, in a biting in, or keeping down our fretting affections, from venting themselves in words or carriage, or in a sullen silence or stupidity; but in the maintaining such a tranquility of spirit under all we suffer, as that we can still both enjoy and serve the Lord. He is a patient Christian, that is as much a Christian in a storm, as a calm; that can pray, believe, love, bless God, follow God, and keep his way when he smites, as when he smiles.

Lastly, in all this, a Christian is upheld & carried on *from Gospel-grounds*. 'Tis not a natural hardness or apathy; 'tis not the spirit of a man that does sustain his infirmities; 'tis upon the everlasting gospel that he stands. There are three things especially that bear him through. His viewing, 1 The hand of the Lord. 2 The End of

the Lord. 3. The help of the Lord.

1. He sees *the hand of the Lord* in all that befalls him: Whence was *David's* patience? *Psal. 39. 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou Lord didst it.* Whence was *Eli's* patience? *1 Sam. 3. It is the Lord, let him do what seems him good.* Whence was *Job's* patience? *Job. 1. 21. The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* By the way note, That a godly man is not only patient under his afflictions, but thankful: He is not only thankful for Mercies, but for Chastisements. 'Tis not only, *the Lord hath given*, blessed be his Name; the Lord hath built me up, the Lord hath filled me, the Lord hath hedged me, blessed be his Name: but also, *The Lord hath taken away*, the Lord hath humbled me, broken me, undone me, left me naked, left me nothing, blessed be the Name of the Lord. This by the way.

2. He sees *the end of the Lord*; that God intends his good by all that comes upon him. He knows that all things, and therefore this which is upon him, whatever it be, shall work to him for good.

3. He feels *the Help of the Lord*. When the hand of the Lord is upon him, he feels also the hand of the Lord under him, *underneath the everlasting arms*, Deut. 32. 27.

The Gospel, as it hath allotted him many Tribulations, so it hath allowed him many Supports, *A mighty God*, who is the Rock of Ages, *Isa. 26. A merciful High Priest*, who being tempted himself, is able also to succour those that are tempted, *Heb. 2. 18. precious promises*, *2 Pet. 1. gracious experiences*, *Rom. 5. 4. Patience worketh experience*. This last support *Experience*, hath all the rest in it. Experience is the whole Gospel proved. A patient, experienced Christian hath proved all things, what they are; hath proved the world, and
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what it is, and the worst it can do; hath proved the word, and what there is in it; hath proved what God is, what Christ is, what Grace, Peace, and a good Conscience are: Tribulation often takes away God and his Gospel, and we never so well prove what God is, as when we have him alone; what Grace is, what a good Conscience is, as when we have nothing else left us. Our Religion never shews so much what is in it, as when it's most put to it. When the Adversary hath gotten the greatest advantage of us, of the Sun, of the Wind, of the Ground; when he presseth with most violence, with most fury upon us, then we best know what the weapons of our Warfare are. The comforts & supports of Religion are not known, either of what strength or of what sweetness they are, till they are thus proved. *Hazekiah* had never such a taste of his integrity, as when he received the Message of death. *Stephen* had never such a sight of Heaven, as through a storm of Stones. Christ is never so sweet as in a Prison. When God meets his Saints in a Wilderness, then he speaks comfortably to them. A patient Christian hath more or less experience of all this; and hence is he supported, keeps quiet under all his sufferings, and carried with courage on his way.

Be patient therefore, Brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. You have need of patience, and no excuse for your impatience. The sufferings of the Gospel call for patience; and the supports of the Gospel will condemn your impatience. If you will be godly, count upon it, that you have a great fight of afflictions to endure. Venture not into the fight without your Armour: An impatient Creature is a naked Souldier; how easily will Satan destroy, whom he hath once disarmed. The more you *can*, the loss you *shall* suffer. Secure your spirit, and you save your self from harm. There's no

East shall hurt you, that does not hit your heart. Keep your heart whole, and the Devil loses all his shot. Be patient, and you possess your souls; keep your souls, and the enemy loses the day.

Christians, 'tis of great consequence to you, to be of a patient spirit, and 'tis a great duty; there's much more in it than every eye observes.

When I perswade you to *Patience*, know, that 'tis no small thing that I am perswading you to : 'Tis no less than,

1. To the whole of Christianity.

2. To the height of Christianity.

1. To the *whole of Christianity*: To be truly patient, hath as much in it, as to be a Christian: To be holy, humble, meek, mortified, self-denying, crucified to the World, heavenly minded; all this you must be, or you cannot be patient. Patient and Proud! patient & peevish! patient and unmortified! earthly-minded, a self-seeker! This is as great a contradiction, as to be proud and humble, fleshly and spiritual, earthly & heavenly, a Christian and no Christian. If ever you will be possessors of this grace, you must be partakers of all grace. Get a believing, broken, self-denying heart; get your spirits furnished with the love of Christ, the hope of the Gospel, the contempt of the World; live above in the other world: Let Christ, Glory, Honour, Immortality, be the portion of your souls, and the pleasure of your lives, if ever you would be truly patient.

2. To *Christianity in the height of it*: In pressing you to *Patience*, I am herein pressing you to get *Assurance*. Without assurance, though patience be possible, yet you'll find it both difficult, and very imperfect.

What patience, when I question whether my sins be forgiven? whether God be reconciled, and be not dealing with me as an Enemy? What *Patience*, when I doubt

doubt whether my afflictions be not the pension of a bastard, rather than the portion of a Son? when I am not sure but my present sufferings are sent to carry me down to eternal sufferings? I am in misery & perpetual torments, never a day without its evils, I can see no end of it, nor it may be never shall; this or worse, may last for ever. Oh, if I were sure it would be well at last, I could be quiet; but for ought I know, the Furnace I am in, may be the very mouth of Hell; the diseases, the wounds I am under, may be sent to let out my soul into everlasting burnings; how can I be patient under such doubts and fears? Make God sure, *Christian*, make Heaven sure once, and then thou mayest set thine heart at rest; then thou mayest almost as easily exercise, as thine Enemies find the exercise of thy patience.

Christians, if you will be patient, you must be painful; give diligence, be diligent in making your Calling and Election sure; be diligent in duty, be vigilant against iniquity: If you will be patient, be impatient of sin, and you will be patient of sorrow; make sin sure, get it slain by the Cross, & buried in the grave of your Lord, sealing the stone, and setting a watch; have nothing to conflict with in the day of your affliction, but your affliction; beware of carrying guilt with you upon the Cross. Let not the gall of guilt be mingled with the vinegar of affliction: A mortified spirit will deaden all our pains, and a pure Conscience will bear all our burthens.

Till this be done, I must tell you, you will find suffering to be hard service. 'Tis an easie matter to talk of the sufferings of the Gospel, & to boast great things beforehand, as you know who did once, and what came of it, *Though I die with thee, I will never deny thee*. But when it comes to the pinch, when Troubles come upon us, when the hand of the Lord touches us, and touches

where it's most tender, brings those calamities on us, which are most contrary to us, strips us of those comforts which are most dear to us, takes away all from us, & leaves us naked; when we feel the *smart* of the Rod, when every stroke fetches blood, when the feet are hurt in the Stocks, and the Iron enters into the soul; when the vinegar and the gall comes, when the thorns and the nails of the Cross are struck in; when shame and reproach, when scorn and contempt, when hunger and thirst, when cold and nakedness, when bodily torment and pain, are all measured to you for your potion, and mingled in your Cup : if ever God should call you out to take your part with that cloud of witnesses, *Heb.* 11. who were tortured, had trials of cruel mockings & scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment; who were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; wandring about in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented; wandring in Deserts & Mountains, in Dens & Caves of the earth : if ever this should be your case, then you will know how much there is in Christian patience; & how necessary self-denial, mortification, living in the faith and fellowship of God, and the power of his Spirit, and assurance of his love, are to your patient possessing of your souls.

Believe it, *Christians*, the Gospel hath not furnished us with such large provision of Graces, Comforts, Promises, Hopes, for nothing; you will find need enough of them all. Such amazing, astonishing trials you may be called out to, as nothing less than the richest stock of Promises, the greatest treasure of Experiences, the highest pitch of spiritual Graces, your greatest conquest over lust & the world, your living under the fullest influences of Divine Power, and the clearest sense of Divine Love, will furnish you with an enduring spirit; nothing less

less will, but this will do it. Get sin and the world under; make God sure, make the Promises sure, live in a daily conflict with sin; contempt of the world, and exercise of all Graces: Live in the obedience, vision, and fruition of your God, and then you are ready for the enemy. Let your sufferings be what they will, come when they will, your souls are at Anchor, and shall have a continual calm within, how tempestuous soever the Weather be.

As a farther encouragement and help to this great Duty, consider that your patient suffering will be,

1. Your witness to the Gospel.
2. Gods witness to your Adoption.
3. The Cure of your Corruption.
4. Your triumph over Temptation.
5. The improvement of your Sanctification.
6. The advance of your Glory.

1. Your patient suffering will be your *witness to the Gospel*. Who were that cloud of witnesses mentioned, *Heb. 12. 1.* but the suffering Saints, that Army of Martyrs, recorded *Chap. 11.* whose patience is set forth as a pattern to those that should come after? These are the Witnesses.

What was it by which they bear witness, but by their patient suffering?

To what did they bear witness, but to God and his Gospel?

What witness did they bear? *Why, That the Gospel is true:* The sufferings of the Saints are their seal to the Gospel. As he that believeth, so much more, he that suffereth in Faith, hath set to his seal that God is true. In the faith and patience of the Saints, may be seen (as the seal in the wax) the prints and impressions of the truth and faithfulness of God: God hath said, he will uphold, he will not forsake them: and their patience

shews, he doth uphold, he hath not forsaken them.

2. *That the Gospel is a glorious Gospel*: That God is a good Master, that it's good being with Christ any where; that they are no losers by their Religion, but that its wages are above its work, and its pay above its pain.

It were not possible, when they prove how much the Gospel costs them, but they should be weary of it, and repent of their Faith, and renounce their Profession, if they did not find the Lord a good pay-master.

The Apostle tells us, 2 Cor. 3. 3. that Christians are *the Epistles of Christ*, or his *Letters* of commendation to the World, in whom may be read his Excellencies and Glory, and the incomparable advantages of his service. And as all Christians, so especially suffering Christians: the Character of Christ is never so visible and legible, as when 'tis written in blood. The bowels, and bounty, and kindness of God our Saviour, never appeared in more glory, than upon [his] Cross; & there's no such lively Transcript of them, as upon [our] Cross. On his Cross, his blood; on our Cross, his Spirit, & the precious grace and comforts of it, are most plentifully shed forth, 1 Pet. 4. 14. *If ye be reproached, that is, & endure it, the Spirit of Glory, and of God, resteth upon you.* The Spirit and influences of a crucified Jesus, do never shine forth to such advantage, as in his crucified Saints. Upon the patience of a Saint, under the sufferings of Christ, he that runs may read this written, *I serve a good Master.* Our patient suffering is our witness to Christ and his Gospel.

Christian, when God sends thee to *Calvary*, he sends thee thither as a chosen Vessel, that thou shouldst there bear his Name before the world. Art thou impatient at this? What, canst thou not bear this honour thy God hath laid upon thee? Hath God chosen thee amongst all thy brethren to do him this honour, and wilt thou be
angry

angry, that he did not rather choose some other? 'Twas an unworthy answer of a good man, *Moses*, when God sent him to *Egypt*, to appear for him before *Pharaoh*, & to be the deliverer of his People, *Exod. 4. 13. Send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.* Send whom thou wilt, any body but me. By our sinful shifting our selves out of troubles, or our murmurings under them, we say the like: Send whom thou wilt to witness for thee, but let me go free: Let me have my ease, and my quiet, and my liberty, & take this honour who will for me. Unworthy spirits! Oh, methinks, Christians, we should rather step one before another; and when our Lord demands, *Who wil go with me? who wil bear my Cross?* methinks we should readily answer, *I will go, let me bear it Lord;* and not grudge, as we do, that he puts us to it.

Our impatience bears false witness against God, and his Gospel; what is the voice or the meaning of impatience less than this?

Whateves is said in honour of the Gospel, what a blessedness, what an ineffable advantage 'tis, to all that heartily own it; yet having proved it, I find it even as much as nothing, by that all costs and charges of it are cast up; the comforts of it will never ballance them; set one against another, the bad against the good, the bitter against the sweet: Set one against another, and I have made but a bad bargain, by becoming a Christian. This is the voice of impatience. Christian, thou passest over thy murmuring, as a light evil, as if thy pain might excuse thy pettishness, as if it were, because 'tis so common a very small thing; but is it nothing to belie God, to bear false witness against his Gospel? thy repining at the sufferings of Christ, is next to repenting that ever thou wert a Christian.

Brethren, Let us do the Lord this right, by the patience of our spirits, to confess before the world, *That all*
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the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed: And looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our Faith; Let us learn of him, for the joy that is set before us, to endure the Cross, and despise the shame; that we may sit down at his, as he is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.

Secondly, Your patient suffering will be Gods witness of your Adoption, Heb. 12.7. *If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with Sons*: The Lord doth not use to deal so with strangers.

Afflictions are Gods Family Discipline. Yet mark, 'tis not the suffering alone will prove our Sonship, (the Rod is for the Fools back, as well as the Childs) but patient suffering will. For,

1. Patient suffering is it self an evidence of our Adoption, it is the mark of the Lord Jesus upon us. If thou hast both the same lot, and the same spirit that was upon Christ, there's thy Lords mark upon thee, whereby he marks thee out for one of his own. Men had need of other marks to prove them Christians, than what the Rod hath made on their backs; tis our quiet submitting to it, & that upon Gospel grounds, as hath been before shewed, that must do it, and this will be evidence enough. None but a Son will thus submit.

2. The suffering state of Christians, is ordinarily attended with other evidences. Sufferings will set patience on work, & patience will set every other grace on work. Whatsoever it be, that finds work for patience, will therein find work for faith, and love, and hope, and self-denial. Christians never appear so much Believers, so humble, so mortified, as under the Cross. If there be any faith, or love, or hope in the heart, 'twill appear in the day of adversity. If there be any fire under the ashes, throw on water; and you shall hear it, when it may be before, you could see none there. As Solomon says,

says, *folly*, so we may say, *wisdom*, grace is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of Correction will fetch it out. We seldom know either how bad, or how good our hearts are, till they are thus proved: *This I did to prove thee, and to know what is thine heart.*

Besides, this is the season, when ordinarily there are most plentiful illapses and incomes from above; God seldom sends such tokens of love, as to his children in prison. The light of his countenance he often reserves for their darkest estate, he sets to his seal, when the wax is on fire. There have been Christians that would never believe that they were such, till God hath told it them at the stake; the highest joyes, the fullest sense of everlasting kindness, have been most ordinarily the portion of Gods Martyrs. When Hell is let loose upon them, then Heaven is most open. Many Christians have met with such refreshing in their bonds, that their enlargement hath been their prison.

If this be so, Christians, who would fear sufferings? who would not be patient? Would it comfort you to know that God is your Father? Be patient and you shall know it. What would you not bear, so you might be sure you are the Lords? It may be you have been held under doubts and fears, and sad uncertainties, hitherto all your days; you have gone about from *duty* to *duty*, from *ordinance* to *ordinance*, from *Christian* to *Christian*, enquiring, and mourning, and complaining, and crying out. Oh, if I were sure that Christ were mine, that my faith, and my love, and my hope, and my obedience were sound and sincere, such as would prove my adoption, then I could be quiet: Why, if ever God calls thee to sufferings, follow him cheerfully. He calls thee out, to prove to thee that thou lovest him. Fear not to go up with him on the Cross. Assurance is a fruit, that most ordinarily grows on that Tree.

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Let hypocrites only fear sufferings, 'twill be sad indeed to them; there's many a self deceiving Professor, that never suspected himself to be an hypocrite, till persecution made him an Apostate; that's a woful case to have sufferings come upon him for the Gospels sake, only to tell him, that he hath no part in Christ nor his Gospel. Let hypocrites be afraid and unquiet, but let Saints be patient. The same trials which will prove them Bastards, will prove you Sons.

3. Your patient suffering is the *cure of your Corruption*. Sufferings are our Medicine for corruption, & patience our cure: To what degree of patience a Christian hath attained, that degree of power hath he gotten over iniquity. Till lust be conquered, there's no patience: if there be but one unmortified Corruption remaining, and an affliction comes and grates upon that, this will provoke, there's no bearing it. Whence is impatience, but from this, for the most part, that we cannot bear any violence that's offered to lust? What is patience, but this, that we can bear that pain, that lust, when pinched, will put us to? Quietly to suffer our pride, our envy, our passion, our sensual appetites, to be cut short of what would gratifie them, and freely to leave them under that which comes to kill and crucifie them; to be able to want that fuel that feeds, and endure that water that doth quench these fires; this is patience. When our pride is stript of its ornaments, our appetites deprived of their delicacies, our covetousness of its substance, our flesh is of its ease, and we either feel no smart, or can bear the smart of it, then we are patient. And when we can thus leave our *Corruptions* to whatever sufferings come upon them, without taking part with them in their sufferings, then lust is conquered. Lust no longer lives nor maintains its power and interest in us, than whilst, in all its afflictions, we are afflicted:

afflicted: when we feel its sufferings as our sufferings, its disappointments and dissatisfactions, as our own, and fly out against whatsoever falls upon it, as if it fell upon our souls. When we can say, 'tis my passion that suffers, but not I; 'tis but my Covetousness that suffers, my Pride that suffers, but not I; and let them suffer (for me) let them be pinch'd, and pain'd, & starv'd, and die, none of all this shall move me: nay, herein I do and I will rejoyce: There's patience. Patience is Lust conquered.

Christians, You complain of Corruption, you tell one another sad stories, what a burden, what a bondage 'tis you are under, whilst lust hath such power in you; what Briars and Thorns, what Plagues and Stings they are in your hearts. You pray, and you mourn, and groan, and sigh in your selves, waiting for your redemption from this bondage and misery. Oh for an humble heart! oh for a broken mortified spirit! oh this earthliness, this envy, this peevishness, this slothfulness! *I am weary of my life, because of these daughters of Hell. Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death! why would you be delivered?*

Be patient under afflictions; they are the *Executioners* sent from God to slay your Enemies, the *Medicines* sent from your Physician to cure your *Diseases*; never quarrel with Affliction, unless you resolve to befriend *Corruption*. What, will you be so foolish, as not to be patient of your *Disease*, nor your *Remedy*; either bear the Cross, or else never make your selves believe but you can bear your sins well enough? whatever your complaints are, 'tis a sign they come not very deep, 'tis an Argument that sin sits light, where the Cross lies so unsupportable heavy.

4. Your patient suffering will be your triumph over temptation. A patient Christian is a Conquerour over all the World. By this alone naked Job overcame the Devil. When Satan and his instruments have persecuted you into patience, they have therein brought their necks under your feet. This Brazen Wall will make their shot recoil on their own heads and hearts: Your patience will be a shield to yours, & a sword in your Enemies souls. Be patient, and you have won the field, and gotten the day. They will have no hope to drive you to sin, where they see you can suffer. This was Jobs triumph, and shall be yours, *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.* You may now make your boast in the words of the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? In all these things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us.*

5. Your patient suffering will be the improvement of your sanctification, *Heb. 12. 9, 10. We have had Fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily, for a few days chastened us after their pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* The Fathers of our flesh correct us, and so doth the Father of spirits, they at their pleasure, he for our profit. You'll say, it may be, for what profit? What profit is there in our blood, in our bonds, in our poverty? Why, there is this profit; we are hereby made partakers of his holiness. There's seldom any towardliness in a child, till it be whipt into him. Gods School of Affliction, is a Nursery for Heaven: Were it not for his House of Correction, Sion would quickly become as Sodom. Seldom does any come out thence, but their complexion shews where they

they have been. 'Tis with them that feel the hand of the Lord, as it was with him that saw his face, his face did shine; his very spitting in their faces, doth wash them the cleaner. Of all Saints, there are none raised so high towards the third Heaven, as those that have been in the deep. No Providences give such a lift to the soul, as those that most humble.

Christians, what ever pains you travel under, believe it, the births may be such, as will make you forget your sorrow.

I have heard of an holy woman, who used to compare her afflictions to her children, they both put her to great pain in the bearing; but as she knew not which of her children to be without, notwithstanding her trouble in the bringing forth, so neither which of her afflictions she could have wanted, notwithstanding the sorrow they put her to in the bearing, *Heb. 12. 11. No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous; but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.*

Oh, when you see the fruit, where then will your sorrow be, *Job. 16. 21. A woman when she is in travel, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man-child is born into the world.*

If the joy of the birth will make you forget, why should not the hope of the birth make you to bear the pain?

Beloved, would you bring forth fruits unto God, and will you not bear the Plough and the Harrow? Will you expect an Harvest, & yet must God let you lye fallow, and still sow among thorns? Let me ask you, and answer deliberately: Would you be more holy than you are, more fruitful than you are, or would you not? if you would not, you are no Christians, *Si dixeris sufficit,*

ficit defecisti: If you would, is that desire conditional? You would increase, so it cost you not overmuch labour and pain; that desire comes to just so much as no desire at all: Or is your desire of an increase, *absolute*? would you be more holy, whatever it cost you? Do you so surprize and love an holy and fruitful life, that you are heartily content that God should take his own course with you, should take any course that's needful to bring you on to it? can you freely say, O Lord, I am weary of this trifling, I am weary of this dead & barren life; Lord quicken me, Lord enlarge me, Lord perfect thy work, and fulfil in me all the good pleasure of thy will: So thou wilt but bear me in this thing, I freely put it into thy hand to take thine own way, and use thine own means. Use the Word or the Rod. Command me, or chastise me, spare not this flesh for all its crying, strip me of what thou wilt, inflict on me what thou wilt, throw me whither thou pleasest, let me not want the most bitter Pill that's needful, any thing, any thing Lord; I hope I can be poor, if thou wilt have me so, I can be in pain, in disgrace, if thou wilt have me: But I cannot be unholy, I cannot bear it to be such a starveling in the state of my soul. Lord, for more holiness; Lord, for more life, and care, and zeal, and fruit, let me have it upon what terms thou pleasest, only let me have it. Can you say thus to the Lord? I hope you can; what, and yet be displeased if he take you at your word? can you pray thus, and yet repine and murmur that the Lord hears your prayers? Christian, when the Lord comes to deal roughly with thee, entertain his chastisements, whatever they be, with this thought; Now the Lord is about to give me my hearts desire; now is my day of hope: this distress, this sorrow and anguish, the Lord hath brought upon me, may be come to perform that work which I have longed to see, what the word

hath

hath been so long a doing, and yet is not done. What Sacraments, Prayers, Mercies, have been so long a doing, and yet is not done. Now is the time, this may be the means to bring it about. This bitter cup hath health in the bottom; this Plough, and these deep furrows it makes, look towards an harvest. The work is doing that I have been so long a begging. This froward, this senseless, this sloathful, this earthly, barren heart, which I feel to day, I hope now, in a little time, I shall be rid of for ever. If this be the meaning of my troubles, I hope it is, I will wait, I will wait for the fruit; and if this be the fruit, oh welcome, welcome this blessed Providence.

6. Your impatient suffering shall be the *advance of your glory*. Remember what I have told you already, Your suffering shall go into your reward; according to your deep poverty, so shall your riches be; as 'twas said concerning *Babylon, Rev. 18.7. How much she hath glorified her self, and lived deliciously, so much sorrow and torment give her.* So shall it be said concerning you; *How much they have been abased and afflicted for me, so much joy and glory give them.* As sure as the persecutings of the ungodly shall meet them in Hell, so certainly shall the persecutions of the righteous meet them before the throne of God. This shall be written on their everlasting crowns, *Here is the patience of the Saints.*

By this time you see *Christians*, that a suffering state is not so formidable, nor patience under it so impossible, nor your impatience so excusable, as your hearts are so apt to tell you. Suffering you cannot avoid, but you may abide them; your carnal hearts will cry out, I can't endure, & therefore whatever shift I make, I must avoid them. The Gospel tells you, *you may endure*; but (if you will be Christians) you can't avoid them. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution.*

Well; since it's thus, Gird up the loins of your minds, and follow your Lord. Consider him that endureth such contradictions of sinners, and be not weary, nor faint in your minds : The Captain of your salvation was made perfect through sufferings, and (if ye will be patient) so shall you his followers. Turn to your strong hold, ye *Prisoners of Hope*, prove to the world that your Faith is no fanſie, nor your Rock a refuge of lies; that your profeſſion of holineſs is not a meer talk, or vapour. Fear not to bear yours, & thankfully accept your Lords testimony; when the Lord hath fulfilled his ſad Predictions, let your faith & patience ſeal to the fulfilling his promiſes. Whenever the hand of the Lord touches to the quick, and you feel in earneſt, that 'tis not ſervice to be a Chriſtian; when your fleſh begins to ſmell in your face, and cryes out againſt your ſoul, either as *Zipporah* againſt *Moses*, *A bloody husband haſt thou been to me*; or as *Jobs* wife to him, *Curse God and die*: chide it into ſilence, *I thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh women ſpeaketh*. If it will ſtill kick, and ſling, & groan out to thee, *doſt thou ſtill retain thine integrity*? hearken not to it, leave it to groan alone; as thy fleſh hath left thy ſoul to groan alone under ſin, ſo let thy ſoul leave thy fleſh to groan alone under affliction. While thy ſoul is quiet, there's the glory of patience, though extremity of torment make thy fleſh to roar; nay, the more the fleſh roars, and the ſoul yet keeps ſilence, the more patience.

If your fears fright you, & prophesie to you beforehand, Oh I ſhall never be patient; if the fore-ſight be ſo dreadful, what will the encounter be! Yet be not discouraged: you ſay you could be content to ſuffer, if you were ſure you could be patient; that is, you would venture into the water, if you had firſt learn'd to ſwim; why when you are in, then you will learn, and not before.

Tribulation worketh patience, where it findeth none; when you are in the fight, you'll find your weapons; your very sufferings will learn to bear. 'Tis the flesh that flings and frets; but by that it hath been tamed in the house of affliction, it will be quieter. Be jealous of your selves while you will, let not fore-hand presumption hinder fore-hand preparation. But whilst you suspect your selves, trust your God, follow the Cloud of witnesses, and lean on the Rock of Ages; and when you are put hardest to it, let your soul take sanctuary here: *When my flesh and my heart faileth me, God is the strength of mine heart, and my portion for ever.*

Lastly, As that wherein I shall take in the most of these former particulars. Let your lives answer that *spirit of holiness* which the Gospel hath poured forth upon you; Let your lives be *gracious and holy lives*. Particularly.

1. Let the Grace of the Gospel be *visible*, and conspicuous in your lives: shew forth the virtues of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Let your lives be the image of that holy Doctrine, or the holding forth of that word of life which you have received. Admire the grace of God which hath appeared to you; and let his grace appear, and be admired in you. Let grace appear in you in its

Purity.

Power.

1. In its *Purity*: represent your God, and your Christ, and your Religion, in its holiness, to the world. Teach the world to love, or at least, to reverence holiness; by letting them see it before their eyes.

Holiness hath such a glory in it, that it will command respect and reverence, when it is clearly seen. Let your *paths* be pure; as God hath separated you, to separate your selves from the lusts of men, to the Law of your

God. Keep your selves *upright in the sight of God*, keep your selves *unspotted of the world*; if they will be spotting of you, let it be only with your beauty-spots, your Wisdom, Truth, Holiness, Mercy, Meekness, Patience, the Excellencies and Vertues of your God appearing upon you. Let this, that you are too pure, too precise, too tender, too watchful, too fearful of sin, too zealous against sin, be all they have to charge you with.

Keep thee from *thine own iniquities*; say not so much as this, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved must be mine*. Kick out thy *Dalilabs*. Thou must part with thy darling, or thy God; let there be no secret league, let there be no peace betwixt thy soul and any iniquity; to which thou maist either steal out, to delight thee, or turn in to hide thee; let no iniquity be thy leisure or protection: if when thou art pursued by a Persecuter, any sin, as *Jacl* to *Sisera*, should call to thee, *Turn in hither*, and thou maist escape, remember the nail and the hammer; let no iniquity find a corner in thee to lodge in quiet, that thou maist not think a corner with it, where thou maist lodge in safety; say to all thy sinful delights and sinful hopes, get you gone, I will neither love you, nor trust you; however thy sin may please thee, whatever it may promise thee, be sure thou wilt find it a sting in thy soul, and a stain upon thy glory.

Keep your selves from the sins of others, beware of the *leaven* of the proud *Pharisees*, of the formal and vain-glorious *Scribe*, of the extorting *Publican*, of the debauched *Prodigal*, the ambitious *Diotrephes*, the virulent *Tertullus*, the backsliding *Demas*; beware of all *Epidemical Leaven*, the sickness of the times you may live in: Take heed lest you be drawn away with the errors of the wicked, and so swimming down the stream, you fall from your own steadfastness. Let fingers come up to you, go not you down to them.

Let them never say of any of you, *The man is become as one of us, our spot is become the spot of his children.* Let your lives be a rebuke to the angodly World, whilst you live as the children of God, without rebuke in the midst of the World.

2. In its *Power*: let the power of Grace be seen, in its preserving its self in its being, & vigorous exercise against all the powers of Hell: The strength of a man is seen in this, that he can bear wind and weather, can live any where without impairing his health: The strength and metal of a Sword is seen in this, that Iron will not turn its edge. True Grace is such a Plant, that all the weeds of the Field, and thorns of the Forrest, are not able to choke; that will endure not only the Summers heat, but the Winters Frosts.

Christians, prove your Grace to be a right plant, the right seed, the seed of God, let it bear up against all the world; Let not the *winds of persecution*, put out your Light, nor the *waters* cast out of the *Serpents* mouth, quench your love, nor so much as cool your zeal; especially take heed that the *Dragons Tail* do not draw you down amongst the *falling Stars*. You know what a world you live in; You know the old quarrel betwixt the *seed* of the *Woman* and the *Serpent*, both what it is, and that it hath been kept on foot through all Ages to this day.

You know the [*White*] at which *Satan* and all his *Archers*, have been so long levelling, so hotly discharging; the *white stone* in your breasts, the *white Robe* on your backs; A good Conscience, and a holy life, are the mark upon which all the fury of Earth, & Hell is spent. Oh now prove your Grace to be Grace, by its preserving its self against all this violence, Let the Devil see you will be *holy* whether he will or no; let the evil world see you will be *godly* do what they can; though they may make you poor, and destitute, and naked, yet let them

then despair of ever making you *ungodly*; let Grace hereby appear to be Grace, & the *mighty* power of God in you: which that it may do,

2. Let Grace ripen towards *Glory*; let not the scorching Sun wither your Blossoms, but ripen your fruit. If you would hold out, get you on: If you would not have your *something* to come to *just nothing*, increase your *store*. Let your Spark grow up into a Flame, your Grain of Mustard-seed into a Tree. I tell you a *Mystery*, The tallest Cedars on Gods Mountain, will best escape the wind, whilst the lower shrubs are in greater danger of being overturned; If you will stand sure, get you up on the higher ground.

Christians, befool the Devil, let him see himself a loser by all his stirs he makes against you. It is not the first time that his cross winds have proved the most auspicious gales to put the Saints the sooner into harbour. What he hath intended for a *withering Storm*, hath often proved a *fruitful dew*: those very clouds he expected should *rain down snares*, have often *dropt down fatness*: If you will go on, Hell shall help you forward; the Devils Rods on your back, shall but help to mend your pace; his Thorns shall be Spurs in your sides; by stripping you of your fleshly delights, he shall but starve your lusts, his Friends; his Burthens shall be your Ballast, to make your course more steady: Christians are seldom in such a thriving and prosperous state, as when they are just come out of the hands of a persecuting Devil.

Christians, grow in grace; there's no season but may be a growing season; *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*: Let that living spring which is broken forth in you, be like the waters of the Sanctuary, *Ezek. 4. 7.* which at their first rising, were up to the ankles, but a little further were
up

up to the knees, a little further they were up to the loins, and at length they grew up to a great river, waters to swim in, the bottom whereof could not be felt. It may be the waters of Grace do yet run low with thee, a little Bay will stop or turn the stream; thou art yet gotten but to ankle deep, or knee deep, get thee on, stay not till thy Spring become a River; let every day, every duty, every experience, yea, every affliction, add to thy streams; that as the accession of every little Brook to the main Channel, raises the water as it passes along, so it may be with thy soul, that the farther thou goest on, the fuller thy banks may be, till thou comest to be like *Jordan* in the Harvest, whose waters fill its banks. To quicken thee on in this growth in grace, consider,

1. That a little Grace will make but poor work with thy mighty sins; where Grace is low, Lust is high; and low is an Infant like to stand before a Man of War.

2. That a little Grace will not suffice to bear thee up in great afflictions; that which thou maist make a shift with in a calm, will not serve thee in a storm.

3. That a little Grace will be sadly put to it, if ever thou come to have but little means of Grace.

4. That he that hath but little Grace, is like to have no assurance that he hath any at all. If thou wouldest have power over Corruption, if thou wouldest stand in the day of Temptation, if thou wouldest not starve in the day of Famine, if thou wouldest have the comfort of the Grace thou hast, let it grow up to its fuller stature: Grace, when it is come to Age, will speak for it self, and shift for it self the better; which whilst it is in its infancy, neither knows, nor can help it self.

Christians, Let your Grace grow, and let the fruits of it increase: let your fields ripen to the Harvest. I may say concerning sinners, not as our Lord said, *Behold the fields are already white to the Harvest*. But behold, the

Fields are already *black* to the Harvest. The Word is ready to be given, *Come, put in thy Sickle, the Harvest is ripe, the wickedness is great.* The Fields of Tares are already black to the Harvest, but oh when shall it be said of you, *Behold the Fields are white to the Harvest?* Shall evil weeds grow so fast, and shall only the good Corn be at a stand?

Brethren, Let your fruits grow more plentiful, and more perfect daily, let that Scripture be verified in you, *Prov. 8. 14. The path of the just is a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Let your hearts be so filled with the fulness of God, that your paths may drop fatness. Let it be said of you, as of the Spouse, *Cant. 4. 18. and chap. 5. 5. Her lips dropped as the Honey comb, and her hands dropped sweet smelling Myrrh.* Let your lips drop as the Honey-comb; as you have drunk in the Milk and Honey that comes down from above, so be ever dropping it down to others. Let something of the fatness, something of the fatness that you have received from above, be always dropping down: Be dropping according to what you have drank, as you see Sinners, of whom it is said, *They drink iniquity,* to be alwayes dropping iniquity, dropping Oaths, dropping Lies, dropping scoffs and reproaches; So let it be said of you, *They drink the dew of Heaven, and this they are dropping down.* Let no Child, no Servant, no Friend come into your company, and go away without some sweet drops from your lips. A word of heavenly instruction, a gracious admonition, a word of encouragement, or a quickning word, let them have: or lift up a prayer, and drop down a blessing upon them. Something or other of the *Dew of Heaven*, let them feel flowing from your lips.

Let your Lips drop as the Honey-comb, & your hands drop

drop sweet smiling Myrrh. Let your holy practices, your holy examples, second, and set on your wholsome counsels and instructions. Let your words be savoury, and your works be gracious: Let lip and life speak the same things, and lead on the same way,

Christians, by your nursing up the souls and fruits of others, you will ripen and encrease your own. If you should look on all the fruit as little, which your selves have brought forth to God, you will have this to comfort you, *That you have born more upon your Brethrens knees*; the fruits of those fields which you have planted or watered, will abound to your account.

Bring forth much fruit unto God, and be much in *immediate converse* with God, *Phil. 3. 20. Our conversation is in Heaven.* Be more elevated and raised in your Spirits daily, above things sensual and carnal.

Above Carnal delights.

Above Carnal discouragements.

1. *Above Carnal delights* : live more purely in the Spirit; let your hearts be wrought up to such a spiritual frame, that all the joys, pleasures and comforts of your lives may be spiritual. Let the Lord be all your delight, *Psal. 37. 5.* Let it be with you as much as may be, as it is with the Saints already in glory, to whom *God is all*, who being changed into his image, and dwelling in his presence, are satisfied in him. Let *God alone* be as much to you, as *God and all the world.* Let the fashions, and pleasures, and delights of this world, be so much beneath your Spirits, that it may neither be an abatement of your joy, to want; nor an addition to your Content to possess them. Let the light of all these lower sparks be swallowed up in God; when the Sun shines, all the Stars disappear, and are not needed.

Life

Lift up thine eyes, Christian, and see what pleasures there are *within the veil*: Come, drink thy fill of this new wine, let thy Faith draw the Curtains of Eternity, and take a view of those heights and depths, and lengths and breadths of that glory and joy, which there it may discover. Look on him that *sits on the Throne*, and those everlasting treasures of Light, Holiness, Goodness and Mercy, which are streaming from his face, on those overflowing bowels of kindness and compassion, on those Rivers of pure and eternal Pleasures, Rest and Peace, that rise from that glorious Throne, and run through the City of God. Behold the *Tree of Life*, and feed thy soul on its precious fruit, whose very leaves are for the healing of Nations. Harken to, and fill thine ears and heart with those triumphs and exaltations, those raptures and extasies of unspeakable and glorious joyes, those blessings and praises, those Hallelujahs that are turned upon the hearts and tongues of the *Heavenly Choir*, the glorious Angels, and the *Spirits of just men made perfect*, by the vision and fruition of thy God, the God of glory.

Look on, and possess this joy and glory; say to thy soul as God to *Abraham*, Gen. 13. 14. *Lift up thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, Northward, and Southward, and Eastward, and Westward*, through all the Coasts, and all the Dimensions of the blessed Land of Promise, and holy City; and then say, *Come soul, take up thy rest here, all this is thine*.

Look and love, love and long, long and hope, hope and rejoyce in hope of this glory of God. Look on thy God, and never leave looking, till thou art changed into his image, and satisfied with his image. And here let thy delight and thy dwelling be.

2. Above all carnal discouragements, from any adversaries, or dangers, wherewith thou art baited and affrighted,

frighted, as you walk in the *Lord*, let the joy of the *Lord* be your strength, let your Sun be your shield, let your hope be your confidence, and fear not your duty nor danger. Look to your hope, and you will laugh at fear. Dwell in your reward, and you will not be afraid to dwell in your duty : But of this a word more by and by. Thus much for general directions.

2. I shall next give you some special directions for your daily work.

Generals necessarily depend on, & subsist in particulars. As there can be no Religion in a Kingdom, unless it be first in particular Families; nor none in Families, unless it be in particular persons; so a general course of Christianity there cannot be, unless it be supported in our particular daily walk.

The advice I am giving you, I have in part borrowed for your use, which some of you may possibly have received elsewhere.

Before I give you the particular directions, I shall first premise these things :

1. Count upon this, that the directions I am now giving you, (if you ever mean to bring it to any thing) will cost you pains and labour : and how can you count your selves Christians, if you refuse to be at the necessary cost of Christianity ? if you think to be Christians without labour, or if you will stand out from Christianity, to save your labour, you are alike wise in both. Either come to a resolution to fall upon an industrious painful life, or 'twill be in vain to give you counsel.

2. Practise the directions I shall give you in pursuance of your Covenant with God, wherein you have engaged to take the strictest severest Laws of Christ, for the Rule of your life. What I am pressing on you, for the matter of it, is no more than you have bound your selves to as Christians. Remember your bonds, and let

let this holy practice be followed on by you, as the paying your vows. Remember daily the vows of God are upon you, and there is not any material thing here prescribed to you, which falls not under your vows. Your Covenant, if your eye be much upon it, will be a cord to hold you to your work.

3. Press hard for sensible communion with God in all your duties.

4. Keep up a spiritual and holy frame from Duty to Duty. Remember what I have elsewhere spoken to you more at large, on these two particulars. See that there be Religion in your duties, and confine not Religion to your duties.

5. Be watchful: The life of all Religion lies much here, whatever you resolve upon, will come to nothing without it. Watchfulness is the Executioner of your will. Let your eye be upon your Rule, and your Work. Especially watch against your *prevailing sins*. There's no Christian that observes himself, but may find some one sin or more, that in regard of their power over him, are taller by the head and shoulders than all the rest. In some *Pride*, in others *Worldliness*, in others *Passion*, in others *Slothfulness*. It may be, if thou searchest, some one of these four, or possible some other may be it, that by a specialty thou maist call [*thine iniquity*.] Find out what it is, & know, that there thy main work lies. In vain wilt thou strive in other duties, till that which hinders, be removed out of the way. *Fight neither against small or great, but against the King of Israel.* Where the Enemy most ordinarily makes his breach upon thee, set the stronger Guard. Let thy daily conflicts be here, and observe diligently with what success.

6. Walk on thy course in the name and strength of the Lord Jesus, live by Faith, depend on Christ for the assistance of his mighty Spirit. Forget not this, for otherwise thou wilt go but lamely on. These

These things premised, I shall now give you the particular directions.

1. Directions for the Evening.

Every Evening before you sleep, withdraw yourselves from the World, and having set your hearts as in the presence of God, charge them before God, to answer to these following interrogatories.

1. Concerning your Duties.

Q. 1. Did not God find me on my bed, when he expected me on my knees.

2. Was there not more of Custom and Fashion, than Conscience and Affection, either in my secret or Family duties?

3. Had I any sensible Communion with God in my duties?

4. Have I not neglected, or been careless and over-slothful in reading the Word, and holy Meditations?

2. Concerning your Sins.

Q. 1. Do I live in nothing that I know to be a sin?

2. Have I kept me from mine iniquity? What victory have I yet gotten over it?

3. Am I a mourner for mine own, and the sins of the Land?

3. Concerning your Temptations.

Q. 1. Have I feared, watched against, and not run into temptation?

2. What temptations have I overcome this day?

3. Have I had a care of my company?

4. Concerning your Heart.

Q. 1. Have I held mine heart in a serious spiritual, gracious frame? Have my calls to duty ever found me in a preparation to duty?

2. Hath the Lord been ever before mine eyes, and sternity upon my heart?

3. Have I been much in holy Ejaculations?

4. Have

4. Have I not given liberty to the workings of Pride, sinful Anger, Discontent, or Impatience?

5. Have I made conscience of evil thoughts?

5. Concerning Conscience.

Q. 1. Hath my Conscience neither been blind, nor dumb, nor my heart deaf or head-strong against it.

2. Have I done nothing against, nor with a doubting Conscience?

3. Have I neither defiled mine own, nor wittingly scandalized my Brothers Conscience?

6. Concerning your Tongue.

Q. 1. Have I bridled my Tongue?

2. Have I spoken evil of no man?

3. Hath the Law of the Lord been in my mouth, as I sat in my house, or went by the way, as I was lying down, and rising up?

7. Concerning your Talents.

Q. 1. Have I not wasted or vainly spent any part of my Estate? hath neither my Pride had a snare, nor my Appetite more than its share?

2. Have I not sent Christ away without an Alms when I had it by me?

3. Have I redeemed my time from

Needless Visits,

Idle imaginations;

Fruitless discourse, and

Unnecessary sleep?

4. Have I not lost an opportunity this day, of doing or receiving good? Have I not neglected to exhort or reprove, when occasion hath been given? and if I have been reprov'd, how have I born it?

8. Concerning your Tables.

Q. 1. Did I not sit down with no higher ends than a Beast, only to please my appetite? Did I eat and drink to the glory of God?

2. Did

5. Did I not eat or drink to excess?

3. Did I not rise from the Table without letting fall any thing of God there?

4. Did I not mock God, when I pretended to crave a Blessing, or return Thanks?

9. Concerning your Calling.

Q. 1. Have I been serving the Lord this day, in my particular Calling?

2. Have I not been idle?

3. Have I not over-eagerly minded my earthly affairs?

4. Have I defrauded no man, wronged no man?

5. Have I dropped never a lye, nor broken my promise in all my dealings?

10. Concerning your Relations.

Q. 1. Have I faithfully discharged, and done nothing against my duty to my Relations? have I beloved my self as a Christian, Husband and Wife, Parent and Child, Master and Servant?

11. Concerning your carriage to those within.

Q. Have I carried my self towards all Saints.

1. Lovingly,

Delighting in them,

Bearing with them,

Covering their infirmities.

2. Peaceably, not provoking them to envy.

3. Profitably, provoking them to love and good works?

12. Concerning your carriage to those without.

Q. Have I carried my self to those without.

1. Wisely, that they have not been a snare to me, nor I through my fault become a prey unto them?

2. Inoffensively, have I not been a stumbling block to them?

3. Cour-

3. Courteously and compassionately; that I might the better win upon them?

13. Concerning Providences.

Q. 1. Have I diligently observed all the remarkable Providences of God towards me, especially such as have come in as returns of Prayer?

2. Have I been thankful for my daily mercies?

3. How have I born this dayes crosses?

14. Concerning the use of your liberty?

Q. Have I kept my self far enough within my bounds?

In Sum:

Q. 1. What have I done for God or my soul this day? have I not lost one day more?

2. Have I led this day a diligent, watchful, self-denying life?

Direction for the Morning.

1. If through necessity or carelesness, you have omitted the reading and weighing these Questions in the Evening, be sure to do it now.

2. Ask thy self, What sins have I committed? What duties have I omitted? Against which of these Rules have I offended the day fore-going? And renew thy repentance, and double thy watch.

3. Examine whether God were first and last in thy thoughts, Morning and Evening.

4. Be careful to set thine ends right, for all the day.

An Advertisement

If you want time to make daily enquiry upon every one of the forementioned particulars, (they being so many) let a mark upon, or write out such of them, as most especially concern your case, and let them not be forgotten. Think not thy self excused from this course, because 'tis too long; when, if need be, thou maist thus make it shorter: Better cut short than wholly give out.

For the help of the weaker, I shall gather out these few of the chief Interrogatories, which when they are straitned for time, they may only use; and to which they may add more, as they have occasion and opportunity.

2. 1. Was I serious, and had I any sensible Communion with God, this day, in my secret and Family duties?

2. Hath it been my care to keep mine heart in an holy frame, from duty to duty?

3. Have I been much in holy Ejaculations?

4. Have I not given liberty to the working of pride, sinful anger, discontent, or impatience; nor so much as to vain thoughts?

5. Have I not inordinately minded earthly things?

6. Have I kept me from *mine* iniquity, and not lived in any known sin?

7. Have I wronged no man in word nor deed?

8. Have I been temperate and self-denying in the use of the Creatures?

9. Hath the Law of the Lord been much in my mouth?

10. Have I not sent Christ away without an Alms, when I had it by me?

11. Have I not lost an opportunity of doing or receiving good?

12. Have I not neglected nor done any thing against my duty to my Relation?

13. What have I don for God or my soul this day? have I not lost one day more?

14. Have I been diligent and watchful?

Christians, here is a course prescribed, which by the ordinary assistance, which the Lord doth not deny, you may take up if you will; and which if you conscientiously observe, will be, without doubt, through the blessing of God attended with great success. And those that do not take up this course, or some other equivalent to it, let them never think to ease their hearts by idle complaints, I cannot attain to such a holy, even fruitful, heavenly life, as I desire; I would, but I cannot; God will abhor such lazie complaints, and look upon them as they are, a meer device to keep you quiet under a sloathful heart.

Set your whole Duty daily before *your eyes*, charge it upon your hearts, take an account of your selves how you discharge it; set upon it as that which is no other than you have vowed to the Lord; commit your selves and your wayes to him for succour; and if this doth not mightily conduce to advance you in point of holiness, and establish you in point of peace, then say, that both the Precepts and Promises of the Gospel have deceived you.

And thus I have set before you that holy conversation which becometh the Gospel. Take up this holy course, let this be your life you mean to lead, and let it be carried on,

In an holy Union.

In an united Contention.

In an Holy boldness.

1. In an holy Union: So the Apostle there adds, *stand fast in one spirit, with one mind.* Never look to thrive in Grace, if you do not live in peace. The decaies of Christianity, lie much upon the score of the divisions of Christians. The Devil hath also taken up that Maxime. *Divide & Impera*, rent them, and ruine them. The reason why our Love is so cold, is because our differences are so hot. The reason of so little zeal against sin, hath been the great strife among Brethren. The combinations of Sinners have not so much prejudiced the power of holiness, as the contentions of Saints. There are not a few who go under the name of Saints, that have maintained disputes about Religion so long, till they have disputed themselves out of all Religion; their searching for truth, hath been the loss of both love and life.

Christians, If ever you would be any thing, be one; be of one heart, of one mind, *holding the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* It were greatly to be desired, That the people of God were both of *one heart*, and of *one way*: But if this may not be, if there cannot be *Uniformity*, yet let there be *Unity* betwixt all that fear the Lord in truth.

A few words I shall leave with you for your direction herein.

1. Divide not from the Head, to unite with any pretended Members; hold not with them that hold not with the Head. Sell not Truth, clear, fundamental truth, to buy Peace.

2. Divide not from real Members, lest you hereby prove your division from the Head. Christ hath but one body, if you be not in union with the body, you are divided from the Head,

3. See the Head in every Member, see Christ in every Saint.

4. Prize Christ where ever you see him. Love Christ, and love his *Image*; if you will not slight Christ, slight not any Saint. Seest thou an humble, meek, patient, broken-hearted; self-denying, mortified Christian; in whatsoever unpleasant form (as to matters circumstantial) he appears, despise him not, reject him not.

5. Prize Peace and Union, as the strength and honour of the body.

6. Pursue Peace and Union, with the utmost strength of thy soul. And that you may obtain it,

1. Let all parties that are named of Christ, be *humbled* under former divisions. What peace so long as God is angry? Oh how have we provoked the Lord, by provoking one another! Let him only who hath been without sin in this matter, be without sorrow and shame.

Sure they are hard hearts, who are not broken under such breaches. Let us not mistake our selves, nor mis-call that zeal for God, which God will call pride and peevishness.

I speak not against our being offended, either with error or iniquity; we may not call evil good, or darkness light, for peace sake; but at our unreasonable passions, against whom we suppose erring Brethren.

If the reproach of the Gospel, the hardning of the perverse, the stumbling of the weak, if the hindering of Edification, the promoting of confusion, and every evil work, which have been the sad *effects* of our divisions; if Pride and Haughtiness, if Vanity and Wantonness, if Envy and Uncharitableness, which have been the *womb* from which our contentions have sprung, be matter of humiliation, then sure we had need be brought upon our knees: we must be melted ere we can be moulded up into one.

2. Let

2. Let all parties unite sincerely in *their ends* : Let the honour of Christ, the advancement of practical godliness, the destruction of the interest of the flesh, the edification of the whole body in faith and holiness, be looked at with a single eye, & pursued with a plain and honest heart ; let not the interest of a party, the affection of superiority and dominion, the carrying on of selfish or fleshly designs ; let the *God* or the *Christ* you are driving for, unbias your spirits ; take the right mark, and let your motions be sincerely levelled at it. If we were once set right in our ends, an accommodation of all our differences about the means, would be more facile and feasible, *Prov. 11. 3, 5. The integrity of the upright shall guide him, the uprightness of the perfect shall direct his way.* Humble, single, honest hearts, are most like to hit upon the good and honest way : If we had nothing to do but to please the Lord, we should not have much to do to please one another,

3. Let all parties unite in this Rule, *Do as you would be done by* ; that is, as being well informed, and advised, and freed from evil, and discomposed affections, (for so the Rule is to be understood) you would that men should do unto you : Allow to others what you challenge to your selves ; or would, if you were in their circumstances : Deny not what you would demand : The same liberty, the same charity that you would expect from other Christians, allow to them.

4. No longer tie up Christ to a party, say not, *Lo here is Christ, and not there* : Say of all Believers, though of different forms, *As we are Christs, so they are Christs.* Of all the sub-divisions of *Protestants* that are considerable amongst us, there's no party, the union with which makes us, or the separation from which unmakes us *Christians*. We had need to have more to shew for our Christianity.

than that we are *Presbyterians, Independants, Anabaptists, Episcopals* or *Erastians*; and the Devil must have more to prove us no Christians, than this, that we are in union with either of these, or in separation from them.

5. In matters circumstantial, be not over hasty in stamping a *fas divinum* on things disputable and doubtful: Put no more weight, nor a greater necessity on any thing, than God hath evidently put on it; and spend no more of your zeal about it, than is proportionable to its weight and evidence.

6. Allow for the imperfect state the Church is in, we know but in part; & till that which is perfect is come & that which is imperfect is done away, we must bear with one another, if in any things we be otherwise minded.

7. Stretch not your Authority *beyond your Line*; take not too much upon you, think not to bring all others, in every thing, to your Standard, impose not your Consciences as a Law upon others.

8. Put not Conscience to the ill Office of being a meer *Make-bate*; catch not up every notion, and presently charge it upon Conscience, as that which must be maintained, though to the greatest prejudice of the whole interest of Religion, and so rent and run away from all those that agree not with you. Be not rash, be not heady, be tender, but be wary; be well instructed, if you will be truly tender; first carefully inform thy Conscience, and then peaceably follow it.

Of what is that Conscience tender, that is not tender of making wounds and rents in the body of Christ?

9. Beware of *Censurings* and *Judgings*, of biting and devouring one another. *If ye bite and devour one another, ye shall be consumed one of another.* Let him that is without fault, cast the first stone at his *erring Brother*. Be not bitter against the bitterness of others: if others *sow nels offend thee*, yet let it not *leaven thee*: Be not
reviled

reviled into a Reviler, scoffed into a scoffer ; overcome evil with goodness: 'Tis not seldom that our invectives against others bitterness, are more keen and cutting than that we complain of : Justifie not what thou judgest : Practise not thy self, what in the same breath thou condemnest in thy *Brethren* : Throw not back thy *Brothers* Fire-balls in his Face, lest in censuring him, thou be also thine own Iudg : Pursue not matters in difference over hotly, but learn modestly and meekly to differ, where you cannot agree.

10. Let your conversation be so holy, humble, and heavenly, carry your selves in such simplicity and godly sincerity towards God, towards one another, and towards all men, that you may command each other to believe, that however you agree not about your *Mother*, yet you are all the children of the same *Father*; that you are of God ; and that the spirit of the living God dwelleth in you.

11. Hold *communion* in the things wherein you agree, and *charity* where you differ: May you not pray, & fast and hear, and hold *Christian conferences* together ? Sure there is not over much of Gospel-Spirit, where this will not be granted ?

12. Impose not on each other any hard and unnecessary *conditions* of your *communion*. Suppose, upon your differing Judgments, there be in some things different practices, which some of you judge less warrantable, whilst the Consciences of others allow and use ; press not the relinquishing such questionable practices, as the *condition of your communion* ; especially, if they be not mingled with the duties wherein you joyn, but are used by any of you, at other times, or in other assemblies. Excommunicate not them from you, excommunicate not your selves from them with whom *Christ holds communion*. Judge not that Christ withdraws from all those

who are not in every thing of your mind and way. Destroy not all communion, by seeking after a purer, than in this our imperfect state, we shall ever attain. According to this principle, (no communion at all, if not in all) where shall we rest? In all Societies something will offend.

13. And lastly, In your communion receive not one another to *doubtful Disputations*. Let your *Prayers, Conferences*, and all *holy Exercises*, be *studiously* so managed, that there may be a sweet accord of your Spirits therein: Come not together to strengthen Parties, or propagate Opinions, Let all matters of controverſie be waved; and hereof let there be such a mutual assurance given beforehand, that you may be together, without fear of becoming thorns or snares one to another: Which, if it be not unanimously consented to, and inviolably observed, your Communion will be impossible, or dangerous.

Christians, Are the clear and fundamental truths of the Gospel, and the more necessary and weighty duties of Religion, sufficiently understood and practised? Are your souls safe? is your Calling and Election sure? Is the love, and life, and zeal of God grown up to that maturity, that you need not mutual help this way? Have you any spare time from those things, to spend in perplexing controversies? Build up one another in your most *Holy Faith*, provoke one another to love, and to good works, encourage, establish, and strengthen one another in the known ways of holiness, and if you find not this both better work, and work enough for you, then take your liberty.

These things do, live in peace, and love, and the God of peace shall be with you.

Hear,

Hear, O all ye friends of Christ, by what oblique Names soever unhappily distinguished ! will you come and be friends one with another ? Are you for peace ? Your God is the *God of peace* : Your Jesus is the *Prince of peace* : Your Gospel is the *Gospel of peace* : and will you not be perswaded to be *Sons of peace* ? Your God is one, your Mediator is one, your Faith one, your Baptism one, your Hope one ; you are one Body, one Spirit, and will you not yet be one soul ?

Oh how hopeful would our condition be, were our hearts generally set upon peace ! We should certainly obtain, did we more resolvedly pursue it : and what should hinder ? have you not yet enough of your contentions, and quarrellings ; have not your souls been sufficiently neglected, your Lusts strengthened, your Faith weakned, your Love withered, your comfortors wasted, your Names blemished, your ho'y Profession blamed ? Hark not your God been sufficiently provoked, and the Devil sufficiently gratified ? are your bellies so filled with gall, and your mouths with gravel, and have you not yet enough of your contentions ?

Christians, Slight not these Counsels and Warnings ; As you would prove your selves the Friends of Christ, be ye followers of Peace. Study, O study these things that make for peace. *Follow peace with all men, as much as in you is* but especially with the houshold of Faith. *Let there be no longer strife betwixt us, for we are Brethren.*

Yet always remember, I am pressing you to an holy Union : Whilest I Perswade you to follow peace, I must still add [*and holiness* :] I perswade you not to pursue Peace, upon terms dishonourable or prejudicial to Truth ; They must have both together, that will be blessed in either : Truth without Peace is as a Jewel without its Cabinet ; Peace without Truth, is as a Cabinet with-

with nothing in it. Peace without holiness, is as a fair and promising shell, with a rotten or worm-eaten kernel; holiness without peace, is as a precious kernel under a crack'd and broken shell.

They that have peace without truth, have nothing worth the securing. They that have truth without peace have little security for what they have. Peace without truth, is beauty without worth: Truth without peace, is worth with its beauty marred. Let both go together, and then they will be, both the *Columna Ecclesie*, the Pillar of the Church, rendring it consistent with it self: and the *Corona Ecclesie*, its Crown, rendring it comely and glorious before the world.

Be it thus with us, and then Satan look to thy self, thy Kingdom shall down again; when thou canst no longer hold up *division*, thou lovest thy *dominion*. Then Saints lift up your heads, your communion shall be sweet, your glory shall be great, your light shall shine, your fruit shall abound, the smell of your spices shall flow forth; your adversaries shall envy, and your King shall greatly delight to see your beauty. Oh! may this Grace, this Peace be granted us from the Lord; and let all that love the prosperity of *Sion*, say *Amen*.

2. In an *united contention*. *Striving together* (saith the apostle) for the *Faith of the Gospel*. Unite, but strive; strive not one against another, Christian against Christian, but strive together, let your *contention* be in *communion*. *Strive together against sin* and unbelief, against hypocrisy and earthliness, strive against strife and debate, and envyings and judgings; *strive together with God* in your prayers and supplications: We often pray, but our prayers do not agree; by keeping at such distance, we know not one anothers hearts, and are *so many men, so many minds*; every one prays according to his single apprehensions and affections: what one prays,

prayer, another unprayer; insomuch that we should put the Lord to do contradictions, if he must give particular answers to all our prayers. And possibly that may be the reason why the Lord defers his answers so long, he will stay till we are better agreed what we would have, *Mat. 18. 19. If two of you agree on earth, touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.* Strive together in all holy and united endeavours, to comfort, confirm and establish one another in the faith of the Gospel. Keep up the Communion of Saints, and an united contention against sin and unbelief: Remember, *Heb. 10 25.*

3. In an holy boldness, in nothing terrified by your adversaries. In nothing, that is, either in no degree, not at all terrified; or else in nothing that you have to do, be frightened out of no part of your duty: or else at nothing that they do, or threaten to do against you. Be not afraid to be holy. Tell your adversaries, when they have said and done their worst, you must, and you will make bold to serve your God. Fear them not, and they cannot hurt you; they never hurt you, unless they divert you from your duty.

To establish your hearts in this holy boldness, and against your carnal fears,

1. Consider, That

1. By how much the more you fear God, by so much the less you will fear men.

2. By how much the more you fear sin, by so much the less you will fear trouble.

3. By how much the less your adversaries fear God, by so much the less need you to fear them.

2. Believe, *Psal. 27. 13. I had fainted, but that I believed.* Faith is a buckler against fears and faintings, *Eph. 6. 16. Above all, take the shield of Faith, whereby you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Devil.*

[The

[*The shield of Faith*] A shield is a wall of partition, interposed betwixt a person and harm ; 'Tis only our apprehensions of harm that raise our fear ; Faith will save a Christian harmless, and thereby preserve him fearless. The shield is ordained for a security to all parts, and against all assaults. Some pieces of our armour are appropriated to one part only ; the Helmet is for the Head, the Breast-plate for the Breast, the Girdle for the Loins, the Shoes for the feet ; but the Shield is a moveable, that is to be lifted up, where ever the blow comes Faith is an universal security.

Faith may be said to be a Shield.

1. Instrumentally ; As it provides us of a Shield, as it lifts up a Shield, and sets a guard upon the soul to secure it. It holds up Christ for a Shield, it holds up the *Promises* for a Shield, the very *Commands and Institutions* of God, for a Shield and safe-guard to the soul.

— Sometimes the *sense of guilt* assails, and weakens the heart ; it is not so much any thing without us, as something within us, that raises our fears. How small a matter will fright a guilty soul ? Guilt will make every stroke a stab ; it's the barb of the arrow, the venom on the dart, or the sore of the heart, that makes every stroke formidable and terrible. 'Tis the guiltless soul that hath courage and boldness. *Hic murus abaculus esto*--- Now against this dreadful dart, Faith holds up a Buckler with a *Crucified Jesus* upon it, and so that's quenched.

Sometimes *darkness* and uncertainties about the way that we are in, raises our fear. A Christian that knows himself in his duty, in his way, is out of fear. Clearness gives boldness. Whilst we question the warrantableness of the way we are in, every shadow of danger will shake us : Against such fears, Faith holds up a Buckler with this inscription, *Have not I commanded thee* ; It shews the command, and in that, our warrant, and in our warrant our security.

When

When we question whether our *Worship*, for which we are like to suffer, be right or no, Faith holds up an *institution* for our shield.

If this fear (O I shall not hold out, I shall deny my Lord, and his Faith, if put to it) assails the soul; here Faith holds up the *Promise* for a Buckler *He hath said, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee: so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper.*

2. Formally; Faith not only lifts up a Shield, but is our shield; The very beleiving in a crucified Jesus, the very beleiving the Command, the Justification, the promise, stayes and supports the heart, against whatsoever may befall it; *I had fainted but that I believed.*

Christians, whatever your duties, difficulties, despondences, straits, temptations, afflictions, weaknesses are; believe, and you shall be carried through; believe, and you shall be established; believe in Christ, and you shall dare to follow Christ; believe in Christ, and you shall go through with Christ, and hold out to the end; believe and you shall neither fear, faint, nor fall. Your Faith will both keep you *faultless*, and save you *harmless*; and thereby secure you from sinking and fainting in your minds.

If this be not enough, let me add, that Faith will yet farther scatter all your fears, by this double Act.

1. It will put your reward into your hands.

2. It will put all your troubles to a present end.

1. It will put your reward into your hand; it will set the Crown on your head, even whilst the Cross is on your back. Faith makes things to come present, *Heb. 11. 1.* It is the subsistence, or being of things hoped for; it gives being to the good things promised, before they are. Hope carries the eye to the object, looks on things to come, as come; Faith brings the object to the eye, looks on things to come,

come, as come ; it looks on distance of time, as God looks on it, on a thousand years but as one day. It looks on Gods *saying* and *doing*, on Gods promising and performing, as all one : it anticipates Glory, and gives a kind of present possession of it in hand, *Rom. 8.* (*In*) *all these things we are more then Conquerours : in Tribulation, in Persecution, in Famine; in Nakedness,* (*In*) *all these things we are more then Conquerours :* Not only afterwards we shall be, but in all these things, even whilst we are under them, we are more than Conquerours. The conquest is obtained in the very enterance of the Combat, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith.* Believe Christian, and thy *Faith* will be thy *Victory*, thy *Shield* will be thy *Palm*.

2. It will put all our troubles to a *present end* : Faith looks on things to come, as present ; and thereby on things present, as past : it looks on all things according as they will be in their issue and end : it looks on things to come, according to what they will be when they are come : it looks on things present according to what they will be when they are past : it sees all passing, and considers it as past already : it sees all passing, the world upon its wing, the fashion of it passeth away : it sees the *riches* of the World upon their wings ; the *Pride* and the *Pomp*, and the *Gallantry*, and the *Glory* of the World upon their wings : And it sees the *poverty* of the World, the *Troubles* of the World, all upon the wing. It looks on the *blackest clouds*, as *flying clouds*, and it considers all as gone already : it looks on the clear, that is, beyond the Clouds ; it says as God says, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen* : Not only it shall fall, but it is fallen, and shall not be able to rise.

And what place can there then be left for fear or fainting ? was the Red Sea a terror to *Israel*, when they saw themselves gotten to the other side ? Did *Sampsons*
head

dead Lion fright him? Will the remembrance of what you *have* suffered, be a terrour to you when you are gotten through, and are come out of Tribulation? Why open the eye of your Faith, and see the Coast already clear? You will see the Red Sea behind you, the Wilderness behind you, *Jordan* behind you, and your selves gotten safe on the banks of *Canaan*.

Come on soul, what should hinder thee? May be thou supposest, thou hast a great fight of affliction to endure; grant thou hast, yet fear none of those things thou shalt suffer, till thou canst fear those things thou hast suffered. Though thou be now putting on thy Armour, believe and thou maist boast as if thou hadst put it off: *Death where is thy sting? Grave where is thy victory? Where is the fury of the Oppressor?* Thine enemies are already under thy feet, man: Death it self is swallowed up in victory.

Christians, Cherish, improve, increase your Faith, and this will clear your way of all your fears. Wherefore didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith? O tis a sign our Faith is but low, when our fears are so high. The day the Lord hears you in this prayer, Lord increase our Faith, he delivers you from your fears: Wax strong in Faith, and you will wax bold in your God.

3. Be humble; 'twill be your advantage, that you stand on the lower ground; he whose heart hath already laid him in the dust, will not fear how low his Enemies can lay him.

4. Be peaceable; your *Preces & Lachryma* will be your best weapons; the guilt of your unquiet and unwarrantable resistance, will weaken your hearts more than all your partakers will strengthen your hands, *Prov. 20.22. Say not, I will recompence evil, wait on the Lord, and he will save thee.* Patient and peaceable suffering, will be the best way to abash your persecutors, and embolden your souls.

Now

Now gather up all these particulars, and you have the conversation that becometh the Gospel; wherein, that I may perswade, as well as direct you, consider these following *Arguments*.

2. This is to them, to your adversaries, an *evident token of perdition*, this united, humble, peaceable, unanimous boldness in your holy course, whereby you walk in the Spirit and power of the Gospel, and are not frightened or terrified out of it; this is, and will be to your Persecutors, an *evident token of perdition*. The falls and flaws in the lives of Saints, and their *Quarrellings* and *Divisions* amongst themselves, do strengthen the hands and the confidence of sinners against them: The fears and faintings of Saints, are the flushings of Sinners; when Saints hang the wing, sinners lift up the head.

The Majesty and beauty of an holy life, joyned with an humble and patient magnanimity and undantedness will be a dart in the Liver of the enemies of it. It is an *evident token* [to them] of *perdition*: it is not only a *Death-token* [upon them,] *Persecution* is a black mark of a *son of perdition*: but it is an *evident token* (unto them:) it will read them their doom, it will make their own hearts to fall upon themselves, and their own consciences to give them their sentence.

2. This is to you an *evident token of salvation*, (but to you of salvation) the word is sure. To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God. If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together with him. To him that overcometh, will I give to sit with me on my Throne, even as I have overcome, and am set down with my Father on his Throne. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.

(Salva-

[Salvation, and that of God] there's much in that addition [and that of God] it notes, that the salvation of the suffering Saints shall be, 1. Sure. 2. Great.

1. It notes, that their salvation shall be *sure*: You shall certainly be saved, for God hath undertaken for it, that's the import of the expression: If it be God that justifies, who shall condemn? If it be God that will save, who shall destroy? The matter is sure, you shall be saved, and that of God. It may be Satan will promise, *Hearken to me, and I will save you harmless*. But he is a Liar and a Deceiver; he is weak, and cannot, false, and will not. It may be the evil World will tell you, *If thou wilt cast in thy lot with us, take our advice, follow our example, come along with us, thou mayest save thyself all this harm and loss*. But there is as much trust to the Children, as to the Father of Lies: But if the Lord God, the God of Power, the God of Truth, sayes, *I will save, who will say nay?*

2. It notes, that their salvation shall be *great*: The great God will do for them great things; He will save them by a *mighty salvation*; He will save them against all those *mighty hindrances* that lie in the way; *Who art thou, O great Mountain! before Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a Plain*. All the difficulties, and unlikelihoods, all the astonishing, and flesh non-plus-ing Obstacles that stand in the way of their *Redemption*, will be nothing before the mighty God. He will save them from their *mighty sins, sufferings and fears*; from the vanity and vexations of this earth, and from the vengeance of eternal fire. *Christians, Do but go on, walk with Christ, suffer with Christ, & fear none of those things which you shall suffer: & this shall be to you an evident token of salvation, and that of God.*

3. Consider again the Argument of the Text; *These things do, and the God of peace shall be with you*. What encouragement there is in this promise, I have already shewed you. Two things I shall only mention here, one of which hath been insisted on already. H h Con-

Consider, 1. If God be with you, all shall make for you.

2. If God be with you, you shall shortly be with God.

3. If God be with you, all shall make for you: Remember what you have heard out of *Rom. 8. 28, 31.* Christians, perhaps you will not know how to make a good construction of some providences that may possibly befall you before you die. Such cases there may be, that providence may seem to be a plain contradiction of the Promise. Suppose the people of God in any Nation under heaven, should at any time have not only an inundation of temporal calamities, Famine, and Pestilence, and Sword, Oppression, Rapine, and Cruelty, but a flood of spiritual Judgments also, breaking in upon them; a famine of the Word, an eclipse of the light of the glorious Gospel among them; their green Pasture trodden down, their pure Waters pudled, Gods spiritual worship made to give place to Will-worship, Superstition and Idolatry; the Institutions of God, to the inventions of men; his house made an habitation for Dragons, for the Scritch-Owl, and Bittern, for *Zim* and *Jim*, and every unclean thing. And that in such a time, when they had given themselves to more than ordinary praying and fasting, and humbling themselves, and repenting of their iniquities; when they had set their faces towards *Sion*, and were full of hopes that the Lord was about to build, and to plant; to cast out their rubbish, to repair their ruins, to bring in their peace like a River, and to establish his Tabernacle amongst them. Suppose that in such a time the Lord should even spit in their faces, should dash all their hopes, and put into their hands a cup of trembling, should bring trouble upon their loyns, and cause darkness to cover their faces; should expose them to scorn and contempt, make them a reproach, and a by-word; should suffer them to be trampled upon as the filth of the World, and the off-scowring of all things. Suppose you should have lived in such times and places,

and

& have heard them complaining thus; All things work for good! why we see all things fall out for the worse, so far are our evil things from working for good, that our good things have wrought our hurt. Not only our outward good things, our peace, and our plenty, but our spiritual good things have undone us, our spiritual Liberties and Priviledges, our Ordinances, our Duties, our Prayers, our Fastings, our Zeal for the Lord of Hosts; not only our sins, but our prayers, our repentings, our reformings have undone us. We have prayed and fasted to good purpose; we have even prayed our selves into Poverty, Contempt, Darkness, Confusion, into the snares that have been laid for us, and into the hands of those that hate us. All these things are against us, all our fears are come upon us; all our comforts, yea, & our hopes too are running from us, the whole course of Providence seems to be driven on to our utter ruine; every day every hour, it grows darker & darker, worse & worse, every Spoke of the Wheel, every turn of the wheel renders our condition more helpless & hopeless; our adversaries are become rampant, our soul is filled with their scorn and fury, our friends are as a broken tooth, or a foot out of joynt, our hopes are a Spiders Web, or as the giving up the Ghost; the Almighty causes all his storms and billows to pass over us; one day telleth another, one night certifieth another, and prophecies to us nothing but destruction upon destruction, desolation upon desolation; and where is the promise of his coming? The hope of *Israel* is a sleep, her Saviour is a stranger; the Ark of God is taken, the glory is departed, yea, & God himself seems to be gone over to the camp of the *Philistines*, and marching against us: we have waited for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness; the Harvest is past, the Summer is ended, and we are not saved, neither is there yet any to tell us how long. Suppose you should have stood by, & have seen or heard any such

things anywhere in the world, would you not have said, *Can any good come out of such a dark Abyss?* out of such a concatenation of so many dreadful and dismal Providences? Why, by what hath been already said, you might have answered thus, stay but a while, till the whole wheel be come about, till God hath brought off his work from the *Wheel*; and then you shall see Providence and the Promise meeting together, and kissing each other, and shall be able to say in this case, what *Solomon* did in *Israel*, 1 King. 8. 56. *Blessed be God, that hath given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised; there hath not failed (one word) of all his good promise which he promised by the hand of his servants. Christians, whatever may come upon you at any time while you live in this world, distrust not your God, nor be at all dismayed; you shall see the day, either here or hereafter, and it will be never the worse, if it be not till hereafter (take it upon the credit of this word, All things shall work together for good) you shall see the day when your hearts shall rejoyce and say, Oh! 'twas happy for us that matters went so cross with us; 'twas happy we were so poor, and brought so low, and laid in the dark, and strip'd to naked of all that we either took pleasure, or put confidence in: Now we see that the Lord had a more glorious design that he was carrying on for us step by step, by every thing that came upon us, than we were aware of, or could have imagined. It's true, the *Shimei's* have been cursing, the *Ishmaels* have been mocking, the *Rabshakehs* have been railing, the *Plowers* have been Plowing, the *Hunters* have been pursuing, and had almost overtaken, overcome, and swallowed us up quick; but blessed be our God, that hath not turned our captivity, & saved us by a mighty salvation; but hath done us good by all their mocking and cursing, and raging against us: Now we see there was such light sowing in our dark days; such a peace, a sowing in those deep furrows; such an harvest of*

joy sowing in the days of your tears, as hath now sprung up into this glory and blessedness. We are beholding to the Devil and his instruments; our Enemies have befriended us, though much against their wills: We could never have shined with such beauty on Earth, had we not been scoured with such unclean wisps; we could never have laid up such treasure in heaven, as by their curfings, and cruel persecutions, our Enemies have laid up for us. So our Lord hath told us, *Great is your reward in heaven, Mat. 5. 12. Blessed are you that are persecuted, blessed are you that are reviled for my sake, for righteousness sake for great is your reward in heaven.* It had not been so great, had it not been for our great tribulations: Hell hath given us a life nearer the Throne of Glory. Comfort & encourage your hearts with these words.

2. If God be with you, you shall shortly be with God; *Father I will, that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to my self, that where I am, ye may be also. If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the World. So shall we be ever with the Lord.* Brethren, you that lie among the Pops, 'tis but a little time, and you shall hear that word, *Come up hither, into the Kingdom, the inheritance, prepared for you, There are two Come's, or Calls of our Lord; the first come, is, come and work with me, come and watch with me, come and follow me. The second is, Come and rest with me; your work is done, your watch is over, your race is run, come and enter into my rest. The first come is, Come down with me, from the pride, from the pomps and jollities of this present World; come with me into the wilderness, into the vally of tears, come and suffer with me, come and die with me. The second Come is, Come up with me, up out of the wilderness, up out of your Prisons, up from your*

bonds : your *Jubilee* is come, come up with me : Come put off your prison garments, and put on your robes; shake off your fetters, and take up your palms; lay down your Cross, and take up your Crown : from your prison, to your palace ; from the Stocks to the Throne : You that have descended with me, are the same who shall now ascend with me, to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

The first Come is the *come of a Sinner*, Come, grant me your love; give me your hearts, and accept of mine: This is the Errand upon which his Ambassadors are dispatched ; as *Abraham's* servant, to take you as a Wife for your Lord. This is the meaning of all those Jewels, and the Bracelets they bring in their hands ; the Lord sends Servant upon Servant, Epistle upon Epistle, Token upon Token, and all speak the same word, Come, come, come away and accept of your Lord, and be married to him. The second come is, the *Come of the Bridegroom*, Come home with me into my holy City, into my Royal Mansion; come into my Chamber, come into my bosom; come and lodge between my breasts live in my presence, and rest in my love for ever. *Christians*, my business whilst I have been with you, hath been to bring you to God; to espouse you to Christ, & you that have already, or will yet at last be perswaded to give your consent & will give me leave to make up the march, I can give you assurance, That he will shortly come and make up the Marriage; and must say to you, as *Naami* to *Ruth*, *Ruth* 3. 10. *Sit still my Daughter, till thou see how the matter will fall; for the man will not be in rest, till he have finished the thing this day.* Sit still *Christians*, till you see how matters will fall, and however they fall, know, your Lord will not be in rest till he have finished this thing, and brought you home to be with him where he is.

I am now parting from you in this confidence, that however, after a few days I shall see your Faces no more
in

in this world, yet I shall shortly meet you in the Bride-chamber of glory, where we shall ever be with the Lord

Beloved in the Lord, I must now leave you, but give me leave e're I go, to deal freely with you, and yet a little farther, in the close of my day, this once more to open my heart to you, and to tell you,

1. What my parting fears,

2. What my parting wishes for you are, which I carry upon my spirit.

1. My parting fears, I go off from you with, are especially these :

1. I am afraid that there are many of you, upon whom I have bestowed my labour in vain: I am afraid that I have instructed you in vain, exhorted, perswaded, beseeched & reprov'd you in vain: 'twas the Apostles case, and his fear concerning the *Galatians*, *Chap. 4. 11.*

It is my grief, that when I would have no more to speak but an healing word, a comforting word, I must yet drop down a bitter word on some of you; that when I would speak only from *Mount Gerizim*, I must yet again speak to some from *Mount Ebal*; that when I would leave a Blessing behind me upon you all, I am like to leave some bound under a Curse. It's grievous to me thus to speak, yet for the discharge of my duty, & for your own necessity, bear with me: I am afraid, that whilest I have been preaching to you, of an incorruptible Crown, of an everlasting Rest, a Kingdom of joy and Glory, I am afraid there are many of you, that have no part nor lot in this matter, but are still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: And are there none among you, from whom this Gospel is hid? hid as to the light of it, hid as to the saving power and efficacy of it? I am afraid there are too many; I am afraid there's many a blind eie, many an hard heart, many a Spirit still in prison, under the power of their Lusts, & brutish sensuality: I am afraid there are many such a-

mong you, & are not you afraid so to? Oh that you were!

2. I have a greater fear than this; I am afraid of some of you, that not only all my past labours, but this last will be lost also. Those that stand it out to their last day, do usually stand it out in their last day. Blessed be God that there are amongst you, those over whom my soul is comforted: To whom I can speak in the words of the Apostle, *Rom. 6. 16. God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of Doctrine that hath been delivered unto you; and being now made free from sin, you are become the servants of Righteousness.* Oh that I could thus speak! Oh that I could thus rejoyce ever you all! But as the Apostle said to the Corinthians, *2 Cor. 12. 20, I fear lest when I (come) I shall (find) you such as I would not.* So must I say with a greived heart, I fear that now I am going, I shall leave you such as I would not. I would not leave one blind person, one vain person, one loose liver, nor one unbeliever, or impenitent, amongst you all. Oh what a good day would this day of my departure be? what light would there be in this dark evening, were it thus with you? If I might see you all recovered out of the snares of the Devil, every mans eyes opened, every mans Fetters off, every mans Prison broken, and his soul escaped from that deadly bondage: if every poor deadly Creature among you, who yet lies bound hand and foot in his Grave-clothes, might now at last stand up from the Dead, and live the life of God, this would be mine and your great rejoycing. But oh! I fear with this Apostle, *2 Cor. 12. 21. My God will humble me, and greive me, & afflict me, to see in what a woful plight I must leave divers of you.* O ye sons of the Night, you poor, ignorant, and dark souls, upon whom the light hath shined, but your darkness comprehendeth it not: O you poor, obstinate, and hardened souls, upon whom I have been plowing as upon Rocks; and hewing as upon Adamants, who

who still remain under as great hardness, as if in no Dew nor Rain had ever fallen on you. Oh you poor, half-bak'd almost Christians, that have taken up *your stand* in your present Attainments: my soul is under great fears and must weep in secret for you, whilst my tongue must be henceforth silent: Oh every soul, that is without fear of himself, my soul is afraid for you, the fearless soul is in a fearful state. Sinners, let my fears be *your fears*: what, is there such astonishing guilt upon *you*, & yet not afraid? Such a dreadful Roll writ against *you*, & yet not afraid? So many Sabbaths, Sermons, Warnings lost, and never to be recalled; nor any assurance left of one Sermon, or Warning more, and yet not afraid? Such a subtil Devil, such a deceitful Heart, such a tempting world, that you have to deal withall, such a black and bottomless Pit into which you are falling and yet not afraid? Oh what Stocks and Stones hath the Gospel to deal withall.

Beloved, I have laboured much with you, both publickly, & from house to house, to bring you under a due fear and jealousy of your selves; but hitherto your hearts have been too hard for me: Oh yet for trembling hearts, tremble and sin not, fear and pray, fear and hope, fear and repent; *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling*! Oh if my fears were once become your fears; your fears would become my hopes! Oh what a Day-spring of hopes would arise from the shaking of secure hearts! These Fears would be as the thicker Darkness, Fore-runners of break of Day.

2. My parting Wishes and Desires for you, are, 1. That the good seed which hath been sown amongst you, were well rooted in every heart: I wish that my Twenty years Ministry among you, may not be lost labour to any of your souls. 2. I wish that your next seeds-man may be more skilful and successful; that the good Lord will provide you a man that may teach you in Wisdom; gain you in Love; lead you on to life by

in holy example; and if the Lord grant you this mercie, I wish that such an one may be dearly prized, and chearefully accepted by you. God keep this flock from a ravening Wolf, and a deceitful shepherd. 3. I wish that there may be no root of bitterness springing up amongst you; that there be no Divisions or Contentions, but that you may live in peace & love, that the God of Peace and Love may be with you. 4. I wish that this place, where so much good seed hath been sown, may become a fruitful field, that the fruits of Faith and Repentance, the fruits of Righteousness and Holiness may be in you, and abound; that you may be neither barren, nor unfruitful; that Religion in the power & practice of it may so visibly flourish in the several persons, in the several families of this Congregation, that they that go by, may see and say, *This is the field which the Lord hath blessed.* 5. I wish that whatever clouds may at any time gather over you, you may not fall down in a withering storm, or a sweeping flood, but may pass away in a mist, or dissolve into a fruitful dew; that no Persecutions, or Temptations may ever carry you down the stream with evil men, nor blight any hopeful beginnings that are budding forth in any of your souls: If *Tribulation* should be any of your lots, I wish that it may not be to you as the *Hail of Egypt*, but as the *Dew of Hermon.* 6. I wish you a joyful harvest, that you may reap in eternity what hath been sown in time; may you now sow in righteousness, and therefore reap in mercy; may every one that is now sowing in tears, for ever reap in joy: May you that go on your way weeping, bearing precious seed, return with joy, and bring your sheaves with you: May the showers of this day, be the watering of your seed, that it may spring up to eternal life. *Brethren*, my hearts desire for you all is, that you may be saved; and if there be any persons that bear evil will to me, my particular wish for them is, *The good will of him that dwelt in the Bush,*

Bush, be those mens portions for ever. These are some of my wishes for you: will you joyne your wishes with mine, will you turn your wishes into Prayers, and let this be your prayer, *The Lord grant thee thine hearts desire, and fulfill all thy mind.* Brethren, do I wish you any harm in all this? If not, if it be to be wished, that the word of Christ were rooted in your hearts, and your souls thereby rooted in the Grace of God; if it be to be wished, That your lusts were rooted out, your sins dead & dried up, your foot gotten out of the snare, your souls brought into the Fold, your fruits of righteousness and holiness abounding and growing up into eternal life: if all this be to be wished, then give in your votes with mine; wish and pray, pray and press on, press on and wait for the accomplishment of this Grace in you all. I tell you again, I wish you well; and not only I, but the Lord God that hath sent me to you: The Lord Jesus wishes you well; he wishes and woes, woes and weeps, weeps and dies, that your souls might live, and be blessed for ever: He hath once more sent me to you, even to the worst amongst you, to tell you from him, that he's unwilling you should perish, that he hath a kindness for you in his heart, if you will accept it: He hath *Blood* and *Bowels* for you; *Blood* to expiate your guilt, to wash away your filth; and *Bowels* to offer you the benefit of his *Blood*; with this wish, *Oh that it were theirs! Oh that they would hearken and accept!* Only I must add, That the Lord hath two sorts of wishes concerning sinners: The first is, *Oh that they would hearken!* Oh that they would come in, be healed and saved! *Deut. 5. 20* This wish is an *Olive Branch* that brings good tidings, and gives great hopes of Peace and Mercy. His last wish is, *Oh that they had hearkened!* that they had accepted! *Pf. 81. 13. Oh that my people had hearkened to me! Luk. 19. 42. Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that concern thy peace!* this wish hath nothing but dread & death

in it: it is the black Flag hung out, that proclaims external wars. The sense is, *Israel* had once a fair time of it; a time of love, a time of grace, a time of peace. Oh that they had hearkned then, that they had known the things that concern their peace! But wo, wo to them, 'tis too late, the door is shut, the season is over, the day is past; *But now they are hid from thine eyes*. There are three deadly darts in this wish [oh that thou hadst!] it includes in it these three cutting words, 1. *Thou hast not.* 2. *Thou mightest.* 3. *Thou shalt not for ever.*

1. There is this in it (*Thou hast not.*) What have I not? why thou hast not known the things that belong to thy peace. Thou hast had the door of Glory, the gate of Heaven open to thee, and hast been called for and invited in, but thou hast lost the opportunity. Thou knewest not when thou wert well offered, nor wouldst take notice what a day was before thee, what a price was in thine hand; thy peace, the Gospel of peace, the Prince of peace, a Kingdom of peace was set open, offered, and brought home to thy doors, but thou hadst so many other matters to look after, that thou tookst no notice of it, but hast let it slip. There's one dart (*Thou hast not known,*) there's a Gospel gone, there's a Christ gone, there's a soul, a Kingdom lost.

2. There is this in it (*Thou mightest.*) Oh that thou hadst! why might I? Yes, thou mightest, if thou wouldst thou mightest. Thy God did not mock thee, when he preached peace to thee; he was willing, and wished it thine; if thou wouldst, thou mightest have made it thine own, but whilest he would thou wouldst not. There's another dart (*I might have known*) I have none to thank but my self for the loss, mine undoing was mine own doing. There are no such torments as when the soul flies upon it self, and takes revenge on its self; oh the gashes that such self reflections make! Soul, how camest thou in hither into all this misery? oh, 'tis of my self, my self, that my destruction is? The door was open, and I was told of it, and was bid come in, but I would not. That I am lost and undone, was not my fate, which I could not avoid, but my fault and my folly. It seems to give some ease of our torment, when we can shift off the fault. It was not I, but the Woman; said *Adam*; It was not I, but the Serpent, said the Woman; If that had been true, it would have given ease, as well as serve for an excuse. This thought (*'Twas mine own doing*) tears the very cawl of the heart. Oh, I have none to blame but my self, my own foolish and forward heart. This is my ignorance, this is my unbelief, this is my wilfulness, my lusts, and pleasures, and my Idols, that I was running after, that have brought me under this dreadful loss. 'Twas my own doing.

3. There

3. There is this in it (*Thou shalt not for ever*.) Oh that thou hadst! why, may I not (yet?) Is there no hope of recovering the opportunity? not one word more, not one hour more, may not the Sun go (one) degree backward? No, no, 'tis too late, too late; thou hast had thy day, from henceforth no more for ever. There's the last Dart (*Times past*) there's the Death, the Hell the anguish the Worm that shall gnaw to Eternity. This one word (*Times past*) sets all Hell a roaring; and when it is once spoken to a sinner on earth, there's Hell begun, go thy way wretch, fill up the measure, and fall into thy place; The Gospel hath no more to say to thee, but this one word, *Because I have called, & thou refusedst, I have stretched out my hand, & thou regardest not, but hast set at nought all my Counsels, and wouldest none of my reproofs; I also will laugh at thy Calamities, & mock when thy fear cometh; when thy fear cometh as a desolation, & thy destruction cometh as a whirlwind when distress & anguish cometh upon thee; then shalt thou call, but I will not answer: thou shalt seek me early, but shalt not find me.* Beloved, my hopes are, and I am not able to say, but that you are yet under the first wish; oh that they would! Christ is yet preaching you to faith, and sends his Wish along with his Word; *Oh that they would believe!* Christ is yet preaching Repentance and Conversion to you, and wishes, *Oh that they would repent, that they would be converted!* And to this wish of my Lord, my soul, and all that is within me, I sayes *Amen*. Brethren, will you yet again say your Lord nay? shall I Christ have his wish? shall your servant for Jesus sake, shall I have my wish? will you now at last consent to be sanctified, and to be saved? Let me have this wish, and I dare promise for the Lord you shall have yours: even what ever your soul can desire. Brethren, this once hear, this once be prevailed upon; be content that your lasts be rooted out, and your Lord planted into your souls. Be content to be pardoned, content to be converted, content to be saved. This once hear, lest if you now refuse, ye no more be persuaded with, *Oh that they would!* but be for ever confounded with, *Oh that they had!* Let all our wishings and wooings of you be turned into weepings and mournings over you, this once hear; Oh that you would.

I heartily thank you for your good wishes, and good will towards me; for your willing and cheerful entertainment of my Person, and attendance on my Ministry. And particularly, for your passionate desire of my longer stay among you. Which desire, if God had not, my soul could not have denied you. Though the Almighty, to whose pleasure it's meet that we all submit, hath said nay to that wish of yours; yet let your souls say *Amen* to this last of mine, that the Lord God would dwell among you, and in you

you, both now and for ever. And having thus finished my Labours among you, I shall now close up with this double account.

1. Of my discharge of my Ministry in this place.

2. Of my deprival. And shall so commit you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified.

1. Of my discharge of my Ministry : what my Doctrine and manner of life hath been, is known to you ; and what my aim and intent hath been, is known to God. The searcher of hearts knows that tis the salvation of souls that hath been the mark at which I have levelled. My way hath been to use all plainness, that I might be made manifest in your Consciences : Weaknesses, & Infirmities both natural and sinful (the Lord pardon them) I have had many. I am sensible that much more might have been done both in publick and in private, had it not been for a weakly body, and a sloathful heart. I repent that I have had no more zeal for God, no more compassion to souls ; I repent that I have been no more constant & importunate with you about the matters of Eternity. Oh *Eternity, Eternity* ! that thou wert no more in the heart and lips of the Preacher, in the hearts and ears of the Hearers. But while I thus judge myself for my failings, blessed be God for any sincerity to his Name, and good will to your souls that he hath seen in me. Blessed be God, I have a witness in my Conscience, and I hope in yours also, that I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Brethren, I call Heaven and Earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, good and evil, and have not ceased from day to day, to warn you to choose life, and that good way that leads to it ; and to escape for your lives from the way of sin and death. Oh remember the many instructions I have given you, the many Arguments whereby I have striven with you, the many Prayers that have been offered up for the guiding and gaining your souls : into the path of life, and the turning your feet out of the way of destruction. O might I be able to give this testimony concerning you all at my departure, *They have troden in the right path, they have chosen the good part that shall not be taken from them*. Brethren Beloved, with whom I have travelled in birth, that Christ might be formed in you, I must shortly give up my account in a more solemn Assembly : Will you help me to give it up with joy, by shewing your souls before the Lord, as the seal of my Ministry. Every sincere Convert among you, will be a Crown of rejoicing to me in that day. So let me rejoyce, and let my joy be the joy of you all. What shall I say more? If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, any bowels and mercies ; if the glory of the eternal God, the honour of the everlasting Gospel, the safety of your immor-

immortal souls, the incorruptible Crown, the exceeding, eternal weight of glory, weigh any thing with you, then once more let me beseech you by all this to hearken to that Word of the Gospel which God hath spoken to you by me.

2. Of my deprival. The most glorious morning hath its evening: the hour is come wherein the Sun is setting, upon not a few of the Prophets; the shadows of the evening are stretched forth upon us; our day draws, our work seems to be at an end. Our Pulpits and our places must know us no more. This is the Lords doing, let all the Earth keep silence before him. It is not a light thing for me, Brethren, to be laid aside from the Work, and cast out of the Vineyard of the Lord; & it must be something of weight that must support under so severe a doom. I know there is not a few that will add to the affliction of the afflicted, by telling the World, 'tis their own fault, they might prevent it if they would; whether this be so or no, God knoweth, and let the Lord be Judg. Blessed be God, whatever be, this is not laid to our charge, as the reason of our seclusion, either *insufficiency* or *scandal*. You are not ignorant what things there are imposed on us, as the condition of our continuing our Ministration; which how lawful and expedient soever they seem in the judgment of many, yet have the most specious Arguments that plead for them, left me utterly dissatisfied in my Conscience about them. I must profess before God and Angels, and Men that my non-submission is not from any Disloyalty to Authority, nor from Pride, Humour, or any factious disposition or design; but because I dare not contradict my Light, nor do any thing concerning which my heart tells me, the Lord sayes, do it not. After all my most impartial Enquiries, after all my seeking counsel from the Lord after all my considering and consulting with men of all persuasions about these *Matters*, I find myself so far short of satisfaction, that I am plainly put to this choice, to part with my *Ministry* or my *Conscience*. I dare not lie before God and the World, nor come and tell you I approve, I allow, I heartily consent to what I neither do, nor can; but must rather choole that my *Ministry* be sealed up by my *Sufferings*, than lengthened out by a *Lye*. Through the grace of God, though men do, yet my heart shall not reproach me while I live: *If our hearts condemn us, God is greater then our hearts, & knoweth all things*. But however, though I must now no longer act as a Christian, I should, to testify my obedience to Authority, have become all things to all men, to the utmost that I could, with any clearness of heart: But since *matters* stand so, that I must lose my place, or my peace, I chearfully suffer my self to be thrust off the Stage. And now welcome the Cross of Christ, welcome Reproach, welcome Poverty, Scorne and Contempt, or what ever else may befall me

me on this account. This morning I had a flock, and you had a Pastor, but now behold a Pastor, without a flock, a flock without a Shepherd: This morning I had an house, but now I have none; This morning I had a living, but now have I none: *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

Beloved, I am sensible of many weakenesses and disadvantages I am under, which may render a suffering state the harder to be born; help me by your Prayers; and not me only, but all my Brethren also, with whom my Lot must fall, Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good Conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. Pray

1. That God would make our Silence speak, and preach the same holy Doctrine that we have preached with our Lips.

2. That he would give Supports answerable to our Sufferings; that he who comforteth those that are cast down, will also comfort his Servants that are cast out.

3. That according to our earnest expectation, and our hope, as always, so now also, Christ may be magnified in us, whether it be by Life or by Death.

And thus, Brethren, I bid you farewell, in the words of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. 11. Finally, Brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace and the God of Peace and Love shall be with you.

And that God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

FINIS,

HEAVEN OPENED:

Or, A Brief and Plain

DISCOVERY

OF THE

RICHES

OF GODS

Covenant of Grace.

BEING THE

THIRD PART

OF

Vindiciæ Pietatis.

By R. A.

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